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H. 386

FRANZ LISZT,

ARTIST AND MAN.

1811-1840.

BY
L. RAMANN.



TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

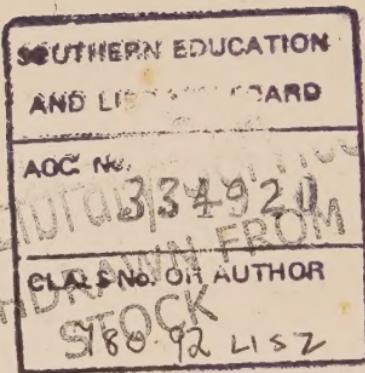
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XII.

NEW PATHS.

[Paris 1834-1835.]

Liszt as the creator of modern execution on the piano. Historical sketches of the classical and brilliant styles of playing. In the concert-hall. Contest with the classicists. Carping criticism.

THIS inflammable matter to which allusion has been made sought above all to discharge itself artistically. Hence arose that great transformation which Liszt achieved, in the struggle which has attached to his person between old and new, classical and romantic.

Liszt had not yet played again in public since he had heard Paganini, while Berlioz, Chopin, and the spirits of Romanticism had entered his being. All that he had acquired for his art of fiery, energetic soaring and high-flying ideality during this time of inner unshackling, had remained unknown to the outer world. Now again he appeared in public, but another than the Parisians had known him.

What he had gained as a pianist during

these years was, on the technical side, a magnificent extension of his command of passages, double stop, play of chords, skips, differences of touch and shades of tone—technical acquirements which appeared in the splendour of deep and full tone, Titanic power and dazzling rapidity. Every single finger had attained an independence and yet a power of expression such as no pianist before him had possessed. His hand found and executed the seemingly impossible. It discovered the art of sounding simultaneously tones lying far apart on the instrument, such as it seemed impossible for ten fingers to reach; and even through differences of touch and shading he produced separate simultaneous melodies and phrases, so that they were not only comprehensible to the player, but no less clearly distinguishable by the hearer. Counterpoint forms, especially the fugue, as the highest musical representative of simultaneous voices, were brought under his touch on the piano, and made living realities. Till then they had been executed more like harmonious masses, and the unity of sound on that instrument had entirely concealed the individuality of the various tones. Only in the quartett for stringed instruments, with its difference of sounds, could the single voices of a fugue be perfectly distinguished.

Not only polyphonous forms, but those also which express brilliant and graceful movements, received new turns from his executions, for he created those varied systems of figures, runs, transitions, and melodies which are distinguished by the name of "musical punctuation." Single parts, which would otherwise flow into each other smoothly and monotonously, without any line of demarcation, he separated, and hereby gave to the form a play of fancy. From the runs peeped forth mocking spirits, and melodies became dialogues. These acquirements, of such deep importance for the general development of execution, were not connected solely with "technical art," they had in the background a spirit and an imagination which effected new creations and transformations in pianoforte playing and music. In them lay the technicality and the execution. His command of the instrument was no acquired art, it was the production and language of his mind, and his playing became thereby loftier, more impressive, and more innovating, and technics and form all melted into a varied flow of spiritual freedom and natural spontaneity which made him a phenomenon. At moments when he sat at the piano, and the demon of fancy awoke within him, all the chords of his spirit seemed to shake, and the whole scale of soulful emotions, from the fleeting

breath to characteristic keenness, from the extremest tenderness to the highest strength, were unchained, and the musical Psyche was freed from the yoke that formalism and tradition had created for her. Themes, melodies, harmonies, passages, and figures, became under his fingers a language which "spake with tongues." They exulted and wept, they yearned and implored, triumphed and prayed—and all that with a power of expression, a strength and fervour, clearness and romantic enthusiasm, a heavenly rhapsody and yet an earthly splendour, such as Paganini—to whom largeness of spirit and of soul, glowing with the feeling of God and of faith, was denied—could never have reached. The language of art is a part of the artist.

When Liszt began to unroll the romantic banner of pianistic art, classical execution was still enjoying an exclusive dominion in the style of "brilliance." With him there suddenly appeared a novelty opposed to this condition of things; the era now claimed its rights and the modern spirit its way, creating and changing. Liszt here, with creative power, achieved an entire transformation. Not only that he obtained for technicality an universality of expression, and for execution a breadth and depth embracing the whole life of the soul, every individual part of pianoforte music became

something new under the touch of his spirit. All the parts, secondary as well as principal, seemed inspirited and winged by the might of his genius. Ornamentation and transition, which before him and Chopin were only means of graceful form and external splendour, he rendered intrinsic and raised to speech, now of the inner, now of the outer world. He unfolded *passage* especially to an unthought-of variety, instead of leaving it an empty show for virtuosos. He clothed it with the whole richness of feeling, and gave colouring of fancy; it was for him a means of poetic picturesque harmony. Now landscape to a scene, now framework to a picture, now background to a thought, to a feeling, to the motive or the melody; it was for him an immediate expression of the world within him.

All the parts of pianoforte music appeared in his execution saturated with spirituality and poetry, and his playing seemed to his contemporaries a full expression of the modern spirit celebrating in Romanticism its first universal, historically artistic *début*. D'Ortigne wrote at that time, in the "Gazette musicale de Paris," the remarkable words which characterize the lofty flight of Liszt's ideals, as well as his execution, bordering on the wonderful.

Our artist sees in all arts, and especially in music, a refrac-

tion, a reflection of universal ideas, as in the universe of God. He is the most poetically complete sum of all the impressions he has received. These impressions, which, according to all appearance, he could not render by means of speech, and express in clear, decided thoughts—these he reproduces to an unlimited extent with an unattainable power of truth, natural force, energy of sentiment, and enchanting grace. Now his art is passive, an instrument, an echo : it expresses, it translates ; now it is again active : it speaks, it is the organ which he uses for the unfolding of his ideas. So it is that Liszt's execution is no mechanical, material exercise, but rather, and in a peculiar sense, a composition, a real *creation of art*.

D'Ortigne in these words has fully recognized the lofty spirituality of Liszt's playing ; it was inseparable from his thoughts and from his artistic and virtuoso ideals ; they formed the background, and gave time and measure. At this period they had a more decided form, and Liszt's original desire for priestly consecration resolved itself into the feeling of a specific art mission ; but the one had not suppressed the other ; both, rather, were united in his ideals of art. From the moment that Liszt seized the wanderer's staff and journeyed through the countries of Europe as a pianist, his first artistic mission began to be fulfilled—from that time he is not only the travelling virtuoso, but the prophet and lawgiver in new paths of art.

Although there is a musical fashion to the present hour, which with admirable perseverance clings to the tradition of classical and brilliant pianoforte playing, designating modern play a

mistake, it is all influenced by him, either with regard to the touch and the cultivation of technicality, or with respect to the arrangement of figures, passages, and melodies, as well as the shades of tone. It is a part of the frequent irony of history that the opponents of progress become fellow possessors of the advantages which belong to the acquirements of those who are attacked by them.

In the wonderful and fabulous sounding qualities above mentioned lay the unfolding of that inflammable material which had been developed in Liszt by the mental atmosphere of those remarkable years ; they became a rich abundance of healthy seed which, scattered into the development of pianoforte playing and pianoforte music, called forth a new epoch ; and at that time there arose a battle-cry in that domain, between new and old, between Romanticism and classical tradition.

In order fully to estimate what Liszt at that time obtained from the piano, and how transformingly he influenced the cultivation and development alike of pianoforte playing and music, one must consider at what stage during the epoch of the Restoration virtuosoship and piano music stood, how much they were the after-blossoms and offshoots of the eighteenth century, with its musical classicality and formal codes

and how far they were separated from the ideals by which the forces of our century, and especially of the years 1830-40, have been set in motion.

That stage was analogous to the artistic direction which was combated in France and Germany by the Romanticists who represented modern times, and was founded on the "lyrical style" of the classicists. In this—Beethoven's works excepted—beauty of sound and symmetry of form in reference to the construction of the phrases and sentences were the principal features, not to say, the style itself. The playing corresponded to this, which again was in harmony with the construction of the instruments, in no wise sufficient for the execution of music which raised claims to fulness and strong shades of tone and variety of touch.

Fétis le père, who was acquainted with the former style of pianoforte playing from his own observation, and had not gained this knowledge, as we of the present day, by comparing the older pianoforte music and the former construction of pianos with that of to-day, says there-upon—

The weak sound, the thin strings of the old pianos offered miserable resources for colouring of execution; the contrasts of loud and soft could only be faintly marked, and this explains the rareness of *nuances* in the music of Clementi, Haydn, Mozart, Dussek, and other masters of that epoch. Towards the end of the eighteenth, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century,

great improvements were made in the construction of instruments, especially in the so-called "Grand Piano," which gained half an octave in compass, and, in the hands of Broadwood and Erard, reached great perfection. From that time, pianoforte music gains in colouring, the execution becomes more powerful, and from the soft and pithy tones of the instrument was developed the possibility of a connected style of playing, of expressive song.

So Féétis.

The development of these latter properties—connected playing and expressive song—belong to the earlier decades of our century; now the "lyric style" of the classical period changed into the "brilliance of more modern times;" and the general contrasts of touch, *legato* and *staccato*, *forte* and *piano*, could be strongly defined; with this the fingering was settled and regulated, which rendered their application possible in melody and harmony, as well as in the ornamental style of pianoforte music. With the advance of the virtuoso elements of technicality, the inner contents of music fell into the background, becoming an accessory, a direction which reached maturity through Czerny, Abbé Gelinek, Kalkbrenner, Pixis, Bery, and others, while the more highly gifted composers, such as Clementi, Hummel, Moscheles, raised the virtuoso element to a high degree, it is true, but sought to unite it with the lyrical contents developed by the classicists. As late as the year 1840, pianoforte playing was in general

of a kind, that is, its principal excellences were rapidity, lightness, and smoothness of the figures and passages, and, as regarded the expression, a soft melody rising from the midst of the sentiment; this excluded strongly characterized contrasts of feeling. A systematic arrangement of the passages, a prominence of the thoughts, an execution rising to the dramatic, interior emotion and depth of expression—all properties which characterize the “modern style of execution” created by Liszt—had not yet been developed. Counterpoint weavings of the voices were treated as harmonious masses; melody and accompaniment moved with the same strength of tone; the single parts disappeared and were lost in the general harmony. Such was the general type of pianoforte playing, thanks to the charms of Liszt’s transformations.

With regard to the pianoforte works of Beethoven and Weber, one might have expected that the variety, the more powerful pulsation, and the romantic chords of the Lyric, that, in brief, moments of dramatic excitement and emotion, would also have broken forth. This was not the case. The spirit of Beethoven’s music was not understood during the lifetime of the great master, and the presage of the historical importance of his works, the belief of their imperishable greatness, was more the feeling of

individuals than a general consciousness; in like manner, the way in which they were rendered was not in accordance with their spirit. They were played "classically," that is to say, in strict time, flowing, smooth, with passionless accentuation, and an amiable expression of feeling. The stormy violence, the strong yearning, the ethical loftiness of his music were hidden in a literal rendering, and, as is well known, it found its spiritual solution only through Romanticism with its magical transformations. Beethoven himself did not play his compositions classically, as we know from the many descriptions given by his contemporaries. He interpreted them "classico-romantically;" but his style of execution brought no change, no transformation, to the development of pianoforte playing. The cause lay partly in his retirement from public life, and partly in the direction of pianoforte playing at that time, which was inclined to the severe school of thought, and possessed no feeling for works of so deeply spiritual a purport as those of Beethoven. To the virtuosos of that time had fallen the task of gaining and cultivating the technical means which were to serve in the representation of a new and wider sphere of art.

Beethoven's influence on the art of pianoforte

playing was therefore indirect and limited, and his execution, sprinkled with romantic momenta, was unobserved by the greater part of pianists and musical amateurs, until the contents of his works, becoming known and understood, had been made general. The former was the task of creative and reproducing artists, the latter that of teachers, theoretical, practical, and literary. Among the latter, Bernhardt Marx has won great merit by his writings on Beethoven ("Beethoven's Life and Works," "Guide to the Execution of Beethoven's Pianoforte Works"), which are free from prejudice and tradition, and not a little contributed to render the peculiarities of his spirit and of his style of execution clear and comprehensible, especially to the educated. In the second work, particularly, he endeavoured to represent, from the spirit of his reproductions, Beethoven's execution of melody and accompaniment, of rhythmical and rhetorical accent, his freedom and connection of time; but he neglected to remark that Liszt had already, after the year 1830, known all these peculiarities, and had availed himself of them in interpreting the works of the German master, that he taught them in his lesson-room. Indeed, just these momenta, opposed to the classical play, had been points of the attack directed against Liszt

by the representatives of the classical school in their contest with the Romanticists. What in those days was contended and struggled for now stands irrefragable, and has its abiding expression in his pupil, H. von Bülow's edition of Beethoven's Sonatas, which he dedicated to Liszt as the fruit of his teaching.

This transition to the modern style of playing was completed by Liszt in the years 1831-1834.

And when now, after having played during this time more in private circles than in public concerts, he again stood before an audience, a novelty and an innovator, they had some trouble to recognize "*le petit Litz.*" A romantic genius stood before them, suffering no comparison with what had been before.

Nor was there any comparison possible with other virtuosos; even the atmosphere of the concert-hall seemed changed at his concerts—a lofty frame of mind, animation, expectation on every face. He on the platform; around him, in a half circle, gracefully leaning in their easy chairs, a group of female beauty and distinction, patronizing goddesses of the artist, all more or less known to him. Among these countesses and duchesses many were his pupils, and he had, perhaps, only that very morning stormed at one or the other, and thrown half-

a-dozen delicious impertinences at their laziness and indolence in the path of art. Now they all sat there in fullest splendour, in magnificent toilette, as at a grand rout. Slight inclinations passed from one side to the other, and between whiles glances and smiles. During the pauses he entered this enchanting circle. Conversation, the eye and gesture of those engaged in it, betraying its spirited skirmishing. The concert-hall seemed changed into a *salon*, in which the social etiquette of the upper circles reigned supreme. It was, however, otherwise at other concerts, and with other virtuosos. There it seldom went beyond the thrice-repeated, and generally awkward, bow, with which the virtuoso greeted "the high nobility and the honourable public," a formality repeated at the end of the performance, whereby he attested his "deeply felt" thanks for the applause received ; and if it happened now and then that a *grande dame* or a *grand seigneur* distinguished the virtuoso of former days by some friendly words, his whole demeanour betrayed what confusion this "great honour" occasioned him. Bent together at an angle of which it was difficult to distinguish if it were obtuse or sharp, he listened to the words directed to him, and then hastily withdrew with a crab-like motion. And now turn to Liszt ! His slender youthful figure ! his proud

and noble bearing! No trace of timidity, every movement grace and ease. So he stood, the youthful god with the *profil d'ivoire*, in the midst of the distinguished circle, which to others was fenced in by a Chinese wall, an aristocrat of mind among the aristocrats of rank—concert-hall and public, all was changed at his appearance.

Liszt's appearance exercised an attractive and animating power over the feelings of his audience; his playing raised it to exaltation. There was no more question of "calm enjoyment." The waves of feeling fluctuated in all directions, passionately stirred to the very foundation. Before him people stood powerless, amazed, trembling as if under a force and an enchantment of nature—an effect which was not always in his favour. In the concert-hall the universal excitement gave vent to stormy applause, but outside to stormy criticism.

Young artistic France rejoiced over him, his playing was a triumph of Romanticism struggling for supremacy; but the old gentlemen crossed themselves and recorded their absolute veto against the general opinion, and in a trice parties were formed, of which both Liszt's opponents and his representatives handled the classical bull, like the Académie Française against Victor Hugo and his associates. That

was a struggle, not for days, weeks, and months, but for years ; a struggle which bore the character of the personal, and yet was impersonal, in its innermost elements ; the struggle of an old time with a new, in which Franz Liszt has an historic vocation as one of the wrestlers ; but at that time, and outwardly, it bore a strong stamp of personality, which, of however small weight such a thing may be when compared with the historical victory of a cause, is generally a heavy burden in the life of an artist, arresting his movements, and filling his heart with bitterness.

An indescribable excitement followed, and it appeared at first as though the opposing party would gain the victory, but this was only where the pen prevailed, and so long as the pauses lasted from one concert to another. In the public assemblies opinions were silent, and the enkindling power of his playing was supreme.

It was now that Liszt became a second time the "fashion" in Paris. The aristocracy at the head, the more highly cultivated classes, whoever laid claim to rank and education, were counted among the attendants at his concerts—an incentive to greater bitterness on the part of his opponents. Among the latter were reckoned not only old gentlemen with classical principles, but also many young people without

any principles at all, but with so much the more folly, envy, and wickedness. Jealousy at his being preferred in society, and at the success of his concerts, acted mostly in the background of their reports and criticisms, wherein they made every effort to dim his popularity. They not only carped at his playing, but also his person, rudely seizing exterior peculiarities to forge bolts of irony. The nature of their spite may be gathered from a little dialogue which "*Le Pianiste, Journal spécial, analytique et instructif*," 1834, No. 4, published, pleading for him: "*For and Against*," the former personified by a lady, the latter by a *feuilletonist*.

"Comment, Monsieur?" said the lady; "will you put *that* into your journal?"

"Mais, Madame—wriggling on his chair like a Pythia."

"Mais, Monsieur"—

"Mais, Madame; his head always goes so, from left to right."

"Mais, Monsieur, you take for a defect what is only a consequence of his excitement, and of the musical feeling which governs him. Like all his opponents, you are unjust; you judge him coldly. To be able to understand him you want a soul like his; a soul which makes his execution perfect and speaks from it, as the poet says—

'Son âme est dans ses doigts, son âme est dans ses yeux:
Cet artiste parfait semble inspiré des cieux.'

Of course you will also find it ridiculous that he threw himself into the arms of the artist next him when the public applauded: what would be more natural? Was not that the free and lively expression of happiness at the applause he received?"

Another and more serious part of his oppo-

nents—the old classical gentlemen—who occupied themselves more with his playing, were not always quite wrong in their censures, but going beyond all measure, they missed their aim. What the young artist had attained lay beyond their ken, but what was open to criticism in his playing they did not recognize. What would have given a point of attack was that, allowing himself to be carried away by his inspiration, he passed all bounds. Full of power and glowing passion, devastating and scorching, he only expressed himself and his yet unmeasured being. The work of art was the material on which he poured forth his feelings.

At that moment he was an artistic expression of the revolutionary Romanticism of the years 1830-40, from which spoke the sovereignty of the *I*. This was the point which they had a right to dispute; but they did not understand his nature, nor that side of his playing which entered into new paths. To be able to estimate they should have been neither “classical” nor “Romantic,” they must have belonged to those few who, moving on the heights of mental culture, their glance steeped in historical experience, are able to separate the little, the accidental, the personal and accessory from the being itself; to those few whose spirits

yet live in that sphere, where faith hopes for better times, better men, higher art, and loftier ideals. Only the art-critic, who lives in two worlds, seeing objectively, hoping subjectively, will know how to follow the great but not inexplicable phenomena in the life of art.

But how could they who revered in Cramer, Kalkbrenner, Pixis, Steibalt, and their fellow-spirits, the representative of classical pianoforte playing—how could they comprehend a youthful innovator like Liszt? Attaching themselves to externals, to these they clung the faster, the less they were capable of following his inner being. In their eyes his mortal sins against the conventional spirit of pianoforte playing were superabundance of expression, unprescribed change of time, a too sharp accentuation, change of rhythm, arbitrary ornament. Against these, narrow-mindedness directed the bolts of “seeking after effect” and “charlatanism.”

This “opposing criticism”—if one can call by this name the newspaper-scribbling which, on the one side, never bears a serious, on the other, never a lofty far-seeing idea—was for the most part the work of decayed individuals, who drew the means of an obscure existence from the events of the day, as the instruments of persons who stood above them; so without any artistic

cultivation they wrote to-day upon music, to-morrow upon sculpture, and the third day, perhaps, chattered about an improvement in fire-engines—this opposing criticism, although at that time, as to-day, in public opinion, a power, could not lead Liszt astray in his endeavours. Like every artist, who is a being apart, he felt himself so entirely one with his materials, so filled with them, so vibrating through and through, under the breath of a higher inspiration, that an interior vacillation was impossible. Like an eagle sailing through the air, the cries that pursued did not frighten him. He flew farther and farther, from height to height ; but in opposition to the judgment of the press arose within him that sovereign defiance for which the former at all times has known how to revenge itself.

The Romanticists rejoiced over him enthusiastically. They found themselves and their own sentiments in his playing, but even here only individuals such as d'Origne, Heine, Berlioz were able fully to appreciate this bold soarer in the highest spheres of mind.

As in the winter season of 1834, so also Liszt's name is found in the journalism of 1835 in connection with the concert-hall, and still more frequently than during the previous year. At this season he was the most eminent as well as the most active virtuoso phenomenon. He

gave some concerts with Berlioz, some for himself, while he played at the Conservatoire de Musique, and co-operated with other artists.

Historically the concerts given with Berlioz were the most important: they represented the struggles of the time. He appeared in them as a propagandist for Berlioz, playing fragments from his "Symphonie fantastique," "Le Bal," and "La Marche du Supplice," which he had transferred to the piano. In this respect he was Berlioz's "congenial spirit, who best knew how to execute his music," as Heine says. Besides this, in these and other concerts he executed compositions by Beethoven, Chopin, Moscheles, and, for the first time, Weber's Concert-piece, which was afterwards the most famous of his performances, and to which his interpretation lent a splendour that made it difficult to decide who had given most, the composer or his interpreter. He also added to these performances some of his compositions, of which the press particularly mentioned a duet for two pianos, on a theme from Mendelssohn, which he played with one of his pupils, M^{lle} Vial; the manuscript, however, is lost.¹ His appearance, as the Parisian "Gazette Musicale" reports, was always hailed with "*applaudissements frénétiques*"

¹ The "Gazette musicale de Paris" mentions this duet several times. See 1835, Nos. 2, 15, &c.

tiques." He himself appeared calmer, his bearing and movements more self-contained, which neither escaped the press nor the public. Liszt had learned to command his outward demeanour.

In spite of all the counter-currents, this season had brought many laurels to the young artist, and he had also acquired no few as a man. He had given the concerts with Berlioz jointly, but always left all the pecuniary advantages to the latter, for he needed assistance. The warm impulse to further everywhere the good and the beautiful stood out promptly in his co-operation at the concerts of others. As the lofty light of his inner life knew no bounds, so his willingness to help was unlimited, and the principle of offering his art in aid of the needy as well as of the beautiful was a peculiarity of his nature. Now he played for the homeless, fugitive Poles, now for a poor family, now for starving workmen. He even lent his performances to professional men who tried to further medical science by experiments. According to a report of the "*Gazette Médicale*," taken from the Parisian "*Gazette Musicale*,"¹ an active physician of a public lunatic asylum tried on a patient sunk into apathy the effect of music in this state. He was supported in these experiments by musicians of different branches, singers, flutists, violinists, pianists, among the latter by

¹ See "*Gazette Musicale*," 1835, p. 15.

Liszt, whose performances were designated as the most effective.

According to all the reports of that time, the young artist was everywhere in the foreground when a flag had to be planted and noble endeavours to be made for art, knowledge, and progress.

From this winter dates Liszt's importance as a pioneering artist. He showed himself as such twofold—with regard to pianoforte playing individually, and the works of his innovating contemporaries as their herald and pioneer.

These Parisian concerts were the first indication of his historical mission as a reproducing artist.

XIII.

CREATIVE GERMS.

[Paris, 1830—1835.]

“Grandes Études de Paganini.” Glöckchen Fantasia. The first Partition de Piano. Berlioz. Transcriptions. First transfer of a song by Schubert (*die Rose*). Its double meaning. “Apparitions.” Victor Hugo’s poem, “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne.”

THE *producing* artist was also active. Several of Liszt’s attempts at composition fall into the period under consideration, and bear in them elements which were to prove, in the future, creative germs of individual originality, and preparatory phases of new art.

They are also a faithful impression of his intellectual and artistic development up to this time in that especial domain where he gathered his first laurels of popularity, a domain that, notwithstanding his many successors and imitators, has always remained his specific property: to wit, working up and transfer, more properly designated as translation.

We have already related how Paganini gave him the first impulse, and how the "Twenty-four Capricci per Violino" not only affected his technicality, but also worked on his fancy and led him to "translation." He had then begun to transfer those pieces to the piano, but left this work several years unfinished in his portfolio. Having a great liking for the task, he took them up again after his great success at Vienna (1838) as a virtuoso, and re-arranging what he had already done, completed it with new additions, giving it —a masterpiece—to the press under the title, "Bravura Studies after Paganini's Capricci, arranged for Pianoforte," &c. (published 1839 by Tobias Hasteringer in Vienna). Although these studies contain Listz's attempts at translation, they cannot be regarded as his first essays, but by them one can infer what was then floating before the boldly creative virtuoso when, sitting at the piano with Paganini's sounds in his ear, he raised himself to be the creator of a new language on the pianoforte. The completed work is a proof of this. What novelty! what difficulties appeared in it for his contemporaries! For many years after its appearance it was deemed unplayable and incomprehensible.

Robert Schumann who spoke of it in the "New Musical Journal"¹ founded and edited

¹ See Schumann's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. iv. p. 121.

by him, gave his opinion that perhaps not four or five in the whole wide world could play it—

A glance at the collection (he says), at the wonderful inverted framework of notes to be found in it, suffices to convince the eye that it has no easy thing to do with. It is as though Liszt wished to lay down all his experiences, to deliver the secrets of his execution to posterity in this work.

And this was Liszt's first step in making known his experiences.

From this "wonderful inverted framework" a new style of musical writing—now current to all—was developed, and what was accessible to scarcely "four or five" of his contemporaries has since helped to form a new musical generation. But from Schumann's words, it appears, how new, how striking and colossal the innovations were. He justly recognized that a pedantic imitation, and merely harmonious accompaniment of sounds transferred from the violin would not suffice; it was necessary to call forth effects on the piano similar to those of Paganini on the violin.

In this work Liszt had not transferred or translated the Capricci to the piano number by number, but in a most ingenious manner he had melted them into six, and, as Schumann says admiringly, "arranged them carefully in the smallest compass," yet "most faithfully rendering the spirit of the origi-

nal." Yet the latter is so faithfully reproduced that even peculiarities in the management of the bow, as, *e.g.*, in No. 4, are clearly perceivable. It is noteworthy that these pieces of Paganini's inspired at the same time Robert Schumann, who published two numbers of "Études," 1833-1835, founded thereon. It is also interesting to compare them with what Liszt in a certain way challenged in his edition, for in one number he has put Schumann's transfer, measure by measure, above his own.

The renown of being unconquerable which hung over Liszt's "Bravura Studies after Paganini," occasioned him to rearrange them once more twelve years later, and a second edition appeared, 1851, at Breiskopf and Hästel's in Leipzig. This edition, "dédiée à Madame Clara Schumann," bears the title, "Grandes Études de Paganini pour le Piano, par," &c.

In the present day the "Études de Bravura" appear more "possible of execution," and virtuosos seek to shine by them in the concert-hall; No. 6, the "Campanella," enjoying the special favour of the modern pianists.

In these Études is to be seen what Liszt, during the years 1830-1835, strove to attain in execution and transferring. They show it us in a more perfect and ripened form; but it is clear enough that at that stage in his career

he did not yet possess in full development the mastery of formal configuration, the unfolding of technical splendour, the all-surpassing *bravura* and boldness. All was at that time in formation, and showed the beginning of the future ; as strength increases by the exercise of strength, so *bravura*, boldness, and configuration of form grow on their own pinions.

The earlier technical standing-point of Liszt's virtuoso attainments, the germs of future creations, can be seen in several compositions of the periods preceding and during his residence in Geneva, which give a distant presage of the wide sweep of the chords, the unheard-of boldness of the skips, as well as the doubling of the melodies and harmonies, making the whole register of the pianoforte sound at once ; these and all other essential innovations are foreseen.

He still moved constrainedly. His *bravura* movements, however, do not appear like those of other virtuosos, ambitiously difficult for its own sake, they are even here always the expression of a lofty mood of power ; their form, however, is not yet so developed as to be able to clear and condense itself to a new style. But they promise it ; for everything points to a creative strength going beyond virtuosoship. Everywhere something new breaks forth, but as yet it bears no stamp of completion. The *is* and

the *has been* stand beside each other, but even the latter is rejuvenated : young shoots rise from its branches.

To Liszt's Paganini literature for the piano belongs, besides the Études, his "Grande Fantaisie de Bravura sur la Clochette de Paganini,"¹ which in the first edition was more properly designated Variations. *With this composition Liszt opens the series of his great and splendid virtuoso and concert pieces.*

Paganini's influence is here unmistakeable as regards technical difficulties, splendour, and *bravura*. A fulness of effect now meets us which till then had been unknown in pianoforte music, but with all this unfolding of technical splendour, nowhere is there empty play. It appears, it is true, rather like the expression of a worldly brilliant yet highly tuned spirit. The modulation and passage-work especially bear this character. In comparison with those of his contemporaries—Paganini included—this is peculiarly striking. The working-up and the tones, the latter as a gleam of the spirit, are quite different in Liszt. As a study of ornamentation it gives fulness of sound and splendour, which cast a rich brilliance over the contents ; and hereby it takes its place as an organic member of the whole and, as with Chopin, an

¹ German edition, Pietro Mechetti in Vienna, 1862.

integrating element of the work of art. This is not the case with his contemporaries. There the passage goes no farther than an unmeaning tinkling sound, void of spiritual charm. As the character, so the working-up of the passage is likewise quite different from that of other virtuosos of his time, Chopin only excepted, his predecessor in new and careful work, who indeed, could even surpass him in this respect, while inferior in variety and Titanic, heaven-storming spirit. Sharp harmonious combinations, as well as the employment of discordant seconds in an original manner—the influence of Berlioz—gave to Liszt's compositions an inexhaustible richness of character, exquisite shades of feeling, and effects of sound of surprising novelty and beauty. The unity of so much ornament with the material, frequently regarded as only incidental and accessory, gives Liszt's concert-pieces from the beginning an artistic value, which raises them above the ephemera of the day.

Their worth is not a little heightened by the stamp of true and genuine feeling which is ineffaceably impressed on these compositions. There are no affected moods, no artificial expression of feeling, no hollow seeking to please, as in the general works of virtuosos. The tear which he sheds is not hypocritical,

his strength and greatness are no empty pomp, his beauty is no borrowed show : truth speaks everywhere—"The first thing and the last that is to be required from genius," as Goethe says ; this is the foundation of the character of *his* genius. Liszt as a youth might have exaggerated, might have gone to extremes, but under all there lay nothing fictitious. Opponents, it is true, called his playing and his music "straining after effect ;" but as well might it be said that thunder and lightning are strainings after effect on the part of nature, although they belong to her powers. His writings are the outpouring of a youthful nature, gifted with strong moods and fancies, and are expressions of a superabundance of feeling and imagination. His fancies, whether they shine with earthly splendour, or to outward appearance are gloomy and sky-storming, are the same inwardly ; and herein lay their power over the minds of others.

In these concert pieces, however, is not only to be found this great feature of inner truthfulness, the traces, too, of those spiritual strivings are unmistakeable which accompanied Liszt's individuality through all the phases of his life, and raised it to something apart, which Heine has called an "unwearied panting after light and Godhead." They break through all

worldly splendour and all earthly pomp, and give them that sky-storming nature and consuming glow which is so peculiar to them, and which have often been falsely designated "demonic." Or they stand in the background and throw over the thoughts the transfigurating breath of poetry, or the lofty brilliance of an apotheosis. They are the element that gave the especial character to his strength, his greatness, and his beauty.

Liszt's "Glückchen Fantasia," though the first of his virtuoso pieces, already bears all the peculiarities of his lyrics: the form is romantic, but without wildness. Classical severity is broken through, but the eruption has not dismembered it, and its discipline is not to be mistaken. On the whole, one may say that here, as in all his virtuoso pieces, the great fresco style prevails. The gradation in the second variation is a presage of several passages of his later symphonetic works. The fantasia itself has not become generally known. Liszt played it in public at the time he composed it, and on several occasions afterwards; but it never obtained so great a success as his later fantasias. It stands at the beginning of his career.

Liszt had entered new ways in the works mentioned; it was not less the case with those

that followed. In them he shows himself for the first time as a translator in an imposing style. Already in his first work of the kind, the transfer to the pianoforte of Berlioz's "Symphonie fantastique," he found unforeseen ways and points of view in this department.

At that time the transfer of orchestral pieces to the pianoforte held no very high rank in the artistic world. They now became something quite different, through Liszt's arrangement, from what they had been formerly, when a transposition note by note was the only thing thought of, without any regard to their correspondence with the peculiarity of the pianoforte. To this may be added that entire parts of the score had to be left out because the accompaniment and melody were the same, or because the score claimed all the keyboard, while the piano could not give the upper, middle, and lower notes at once. The transfers were in the highest degree unfit for the piano, and what was infinitely worse, the spirit of the work of art suffered. Instead of a luxuriant waving harvest, an unfertile field; instead of living colour, a uniform grey, effacing all the lines—thus may one compare the work of art and the transposition. What still more increased these contrasts was that transposition was mostly regarded as the work of a musical hodman, which required

a musician excellent as regarded technical and theoretical knowledge, but not as regarded higher creative and reproducing art. Besides these dead mechanical translations, Liszt's labours placed in strongest contrast all those qualities which spring from the spirit, and from a creative nature. Forming a new technicality corresponding to the score and the capability of the instrument, with a faithful image in his mind of the work to be translated, he created it a second time; no copy true to life, but a living duplicate of the original.

His first of the kind was the transfer of the "Symphonie fantastique" of his friend H. Berlioz: "Épisode de la Vie d'un Artiste: Partition de Piano." "It showed for the first time," to speak in Weitzmann's words,¹ "through what means, until then unknown, the pianoforte could be rendered capable of representing a whole orchestra in all its fulness of tone and varied effects of sound." This translation, at that time practicable by Liszt alone, awakened the admiration of all pianists, and not of them alone, but that of musicians in general. Schumann said, in astonishment,² that "this art in execution, this varied touch and use of the

¹ "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," vol. iii. p. 47. Schumann's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. i. p. 138.

² C. T. Weitzmann, "Geschichte des Klavierspiels," p. 415.

pedals, the *clear entwining of the separate voices*, the condensation of the masses, the knowledge of the means and of the many secrets which the pianoforte conceals, could only be the affair of a master and genius of execution like Liszt." Yet all these points refer principally to the technical amplification which he introduced in this transfer. In recomposing, as it were, Berlioz's symphony for his instrument, he showed how the constraint was to be done away with which the literal transfer exercised both on the work of art and the instrument. He taught a new treatment of the vocal parts, of the orchestral masses, of the weaving of voices and the accompaniment. Now the idea was expressed clearly and plainly, and composer's image was no longer obliged to suffer from technical defects; but this task could only be performed by an artist who not only had made the pianoforte his own in a phenomenal manner, but also possessed a capacity for composition and creative power, as well as intellectual qualities allied to those of the writer himself, especially on the side of fancy. For only a spirit equal to the author in thought and feeling can be qualified, in the translation of a work of art to another material, so as to keep the ideal originality uneffaced. With these transfers of orchestral works to the piano it is the same as, for example, with copper-

plate copies of pictures. Only the engraver who is at the same time an excellent painter and designer will be able to render with the style a picture true as to delineation yet possessing effect and grace. It is the same thing in the department of literature as regards the translation of poetical language into another tongue. Devotion to the author, lingual versatility, and rhythmical mastery may suffice in a general and formal direction ; but in order to render the originality, the power and richness of thought, those properties in the translator presuppose also the capability of experiencing the creative process of the work in such a way that this sympathetic feeling becomes a powerful creation, into which congeniality with the author puts words corresponding to his spirit. All translations in words, colours, or music can succeed only when the spirit is allied to the author in point of education and fancy.

Liszt's transfers of the orchestral works of other masters to the pianoforte stand unsurpassed through the faithfulness of ideal rendering in regard both to dynamic and orchestral effect ; through their fitness for the instrument both in spirit and form ; nay, even through the closest imitation of instrumental colouring, as well as corresponding effect.

Berlioz's so-called symphony was, as we have

said, Liszt's first work of the kind. It was so magnificent, bold, and original that it stands a boundary stone between the old and new era on the domain of musical transfer. The pianoforte has here grown from a solo instrument to an orchestra. Liszt calls this transfer "Partition de piano," in German, "Klavier Partiten," a new designation. He meant by this, as he afterwards says,¹ to make known his intention immediately and clearly to every one that he "wished to follow the orchestra step by step, so that the only advantage remaining to it would be the effect of the *ensemble* and the variety of sounds."

The French edition appeared in 1835, at M. Schlesinger's, Paris; the German edition, which was bought up at once, soon after 1840, at Witzendorf's in Vienna. A new edition, with important changes made by Liszt, appeared at Leuckart's in Leipzic, 1877. Liszt took the single parts of this pianoforte "Partition" and played them, as a Berlioz propagandist, in his concerts, 1835, and frequently later. These appeared also in print separately, and were:—"Un Bal (Sinf. fant. de H. Berlioz)," the "March to the place of Execution;" "Marche au Supplice, de la Sinf. fant. de H. Berlioz;"²

¹ See Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii. Letter to Adolphe Pictet.

² In the Schlesinger edition of this March, the cover bears erroneously the title, "Benvenuto Cellini de Berlioz."

and finally, “L’Idée fixe: andante amoroso d’après une mélodie de Berlioz.” These editions appeared, the first two in 1838 and 1843 at Schlesinger’s, the last in 18(?) at Mechetti’s, Vienna. Liszt afterwards worked up the march once more, and prefixed to it the “Idée fixe,” also newly arranged, as an introduction. A passage unites the introduction and march. This edition (1866, at Rieter-Biederman’s) appeared also under the title, “Marche au Supplice.” The work itself has gained, one sees, the years of experience and interior cultivation which lie between this and the former. All has become transparent and clear as crystal.

At the time when Liszt transferred the “*Synphonie fantastique*” to the piano, he composed, on a motive of Berlioz, “*Fantaisie symphonique pour Piano et Orchestre sur le Chant du Pêcheur et le Chœur des Brigands de Berlioz*.” This fantasia, which remained unprinted, was composed, as we already know, during a stay with Lamennais at La Chenaie. He often played it in public during the years from 1830 to 1840; for the first time at a concert given by him in the Hôtel de Ville, April 9, 1835, where, according to the “*Gazette Musicale*,”¹ it made a great sensation. D’Ortigne announces that the bold and new combinations of harmony

¹ 1835, No. 15, “*Concerts de la Semaine*.”

displayed very deep knowledge, that the instrumentation was rich in colouring, and that it brought out unexpected and magnificent effects by the transposition of the principal themes, and by highly original side themes won from them.

Joseph Mainzer, on the contrary, the reporter of the "Journal Cecilie," wrote of the last (1837)¹ that, "with shining points of light, it contained much that was obscure and confused."

As this composition was not published, the question cannot be decided; but d'Ortigne's report designates momenta which belong to the creative germs.

Liszt arranged three other "Partitions" at that time. One of them, however, remained unprinted in his portfolio till 1845. It was the "Ouverture to Franc-Juges: Partition de Piano," composed by Berlioz about 1828, which he gave to the press in 1845, to Schott's sons in Mayence. He also wrote "Harold en Italie," which had been forgotten for many years, but was again discovered, and thereupon printed by Dufour and Co., Paris. The "Overture du Roi Lear" was also lost before it could be printed, and has never yet been found; that also may, however, come to light one day.

It may here be remarked, in reference to the "Harold Symphonie," that Liszt also handled

¹ Vol. xix., "Paris, January, 1837."

it in a literary point of view, for, after its representation in Weimar with full orchestra, he wrote (1855) an essay on the tendency of Berlioz, and especially of this work, which he analyzed according to the laws of musical æsthetics.¹

With the exception of these two pianoforte scores, which Liszt arranged in Geneva in 1836, the above-named works connected with Berlioz all belong to the years 1832-1833.

Some decades later, at the persuasion of the musical publisher, Rieter-Biederman, who was a great worshipper of Berlioz's muse, Liszt transferred several other works of the same master to the piano. Not to bring the Berlioz transcriptions before the reader separately we name these at once, they are, "Danse de Sylphes de la Damnation de Faust," and "Marche des Pélerins, de Harold en Italie." Both numbers appeared in 1866 at the above-named publisher's. Also twelve years earlier (1854) a transfer, "Benediction et Serment de l'Opéra Benvenuto Cellini," was edited by Litolff in Brunswick, which together close the Berlioz transcriptions. The latter originated during a simultaneous visit of Berlioz and Litolff to Liszt in Weimar. Another attempt at transfer is to

¹ See Franz Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," published by L. Namann. Vol. iv. Leipzig : Breitkopf and Hartel, 1881.

be mentioned here belonging to this period (1832-1835), the first transcription of a song by Franz Schubert. "Die Rose" (La Rose),¹ is the beginning of that series of splendid and ingenious song-transfers which, with their flash of genius, called back Schubert's lyric muse, as it were, a second time to life, and which, if one looks deeper into Liszt's course of artistic development, have quite another importance than those solitary standing transfers which have already become art in and for themselves.

In Liszt's musical biography his song-transfers, especially those of Schubert, are the anticipative expressions of his principle as a composer. *Pure music united to poetry*. The same impulse which urged him through music to poetry, led him also to transfer the song to the pianoforte, whereby he created a new class of composition, without, however, leaving the domain of the lyrical, as Berlioz did in his musical romance, "Episode de la Vie d'un Artiste." His spiritual apprehension of poetry, in his song-transfers, is a peculiarity which announces his calling and his individual direction as an instrumental composer. Historically and æsthetically, they are the forerunners of his programme music.

Thus the transfer of the "Rose" belongs in

¹ German edition, 1835. Leipzig: Hofmeister.

a double sense to the “creative germs.” Liszt had become acquainted with the “Rose,” and other songs of the Viennese composer, through the Countess d’Apponyi, to whom the Hungarian virtuoso dedicated his work. It made so warm an impression on him that, as he once said to us, he was quite in love with it. This transfer belongs to the spring of 1835. This and the already mentioned arrangements and transcriptions for pianoforte form the second group of Liszt’s compositions.

A third group comprises the “Apparitions,” the before-mentioned fragment, “Pensée des Morts,” and “Lyon,” the piece dedicated to Lamennais. The “Apparitions,”¹ three pieces for the pianoforte, belonging to the half-fantastic, half-strophic form of song, though finely worked out, appear rather practised than composed. As an outpouring of fine feeling and intuition, they fully justify the title, “Erscheinungen.” Incomparably clearer and more uniform than his “Erinnerung an die Todten,” they point, small as they are in form, to what has already been said concerning Liszt’s classical education. Though both internally and externally they belong to the romantic creations, they announce a settled foundation.

¹ Edited, 1834 (?), by Schlesinger, Paris, and 1835 by Herr Hofmeister, Leipsic.

Their harmonies and rhythms are spirited, striking, and new. The latter, which are laid in a charming play of figures interlacing the melody, recall Chopin's dreamy ornamentation. Nos. 1 and 2 of these pieces breathe an enchanting grace, fervour, and enthusiastic poesy. Inwardly they are entirely the opposite of that striving power which the "Glöckchen Fantasia" has brought to expression. The first is dedicated to Madame la Duchesse de Ranyan, the second to Madame la Vicomtesse de Laroche-foucauld, both of which ladies were his scholars. The third number of his "Apparitions"—it is without dedication—is a fantasia on a waltz melody by Franz Schubert, of which we shall speak further on.

The pianoforte piece "Lyon" forms a contrast to these dreamily poetical musical blossoms, by its stormy and powerful sentiment and dramatic intensity, as the "Glöckchen Fantasia" does with its outward splendour. "Lyon" is a character-piece which belongs, as we have already said, to the French history of the times. Its harmonious foundation is very remarkable, especially through the free use of triplets, a means of musical expression at that time still unlocked in all its variety, the secrets of which no one has been able to read like Liszt.

This piece was published as the first number of "Impressions et Poésies," from the "Album d'un Voyageur," 1842 (Haslinger, Vienna). When Liszt subjected this album to a sifting and rearrangement, he did not receive this *morceau* into the new edition. It is to be found only in the Haslinger edition.

These three groups of compositions contain, as a whole, much that is new, pointing to important things for the future. The different branches of Liszt's later compositions are shown, though only by passing touches. Particularly his later productions for the piano-forte are presaged. The lofty bravura, represented by the first-mentioned group, finds its contrast in the lyrical poetry of the last, while the second distinctly marks, particularly, the technical and spiritual transformation of piano-forte playing. Everywhere there are flashes of life, upward strivings, originality—creative germs of a great nature.

They were all on the surface, but they only became comprehensible through farther development. Much more was in store, as yet in secret and restrained by his virtuoso career, having to appear after a series of years. Then, of course, not as germs but in a perfect form.

The idea of symphonetic poesy also dawned within him at this time. It came to his spirit

through Victor Hugo's magnificent and affecting poem, "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne." The poet read it in manuscript to a circle of literary friends and artistes, among whom was Liszt. The impression which it made on the latter was so overpowering that it remained for many years, and he could only free himself from it by a musical reproduction of the poem. It was the first germ of his symphonetic poetry.

XIV.

“HE CANNOT COMPOSE.”

His musical translative nature. The mode of development of artistic individualities : that of Liszt compared with theirs. The “Crucify him” of the multitude. Liszt’s creative genius as the background of his virtuosoship.

HE had brought germs—no quartet, no symphony, no opera, no mass! germs which no one rightly foresaw, still less was convinced that they were genuine and would unfold blossoms and fruit. It is true they were rather hidden than visible, more surrounded with an appearance of singularity than of talent ; they belonged also pre-eminently to the reproducing department of arrangement and transfer rather than to that of independent composition. His little lyrical blossoms, the “Apparitions,” what were they as opposed to the great instrumental and choral works, which artists of his age, born composers, had written and were still writing ! The importance of what he had done, which weighed so light in the eyes of the critics

of the day, could not at that time be measured, even by those endowed with artistic perception; but the fact was striking that the youth, acknowledged by all, even by his opponents, as musically ingenious and highly gifted, moved exclusively on the ground of reproduction, and did not pass beyond the limits of the pianoforte.

So it came to pass that they praised him as the most wonderful and remarkable of pianists, but added pityingly or maliciously, "He can't compose!" words which seemed winged, and penetrated into all artistically cultivated circles. How, even at the moment when he began to propose at the piano the enigmas of spiritual life in enkindling speech, how could this remarkable phenomenon maintain his position by a few little musical pieces?

And yet, though his performances as a composer seem to stand in the background compared with his powers as a pianist, his musical susceptibility was extending, unseen and unforeseen, in breadth and strength; and principally through impressions received from the times and from extra musical elements. And is it not clear to-day that all his groping and feeling after events and ideas, his stormy love for, and yielding up of himself to, them was the thirst of a musical genius, that with light hand raised the gigantic goblet of the age to his lips, to convert

the draught into music—a process of transformation which could only be achieved by means of those remarkable mental capabilities which united materials not specifically musical to the musical sense, and carried this through all the stages of *being* and *becoming*, as well receptive as reproducing and producing—that remarkable and essential side of his intellectual organization which might be designated his translative nature.

Liszt translated not only music into music, he translated everything into such. Intellectual materials which found their first expression in the plastic arts; expressions which Nature gave to the eye, ideas which the intellect seized before they became sentiment, he reproduced in music. As Goethe in his youth wrote verses “on occasions,” so he composed in “translating;” and as the poet changed interior experiences into poetry, and what he had *lived* became an “occasion” for verse, so Liszt conveyed the impressions he had received into harmony, into music: they became for him the material of his musical outpourings and improvisations at the piano, the basis for musical invention. If he read religious or philosophical writings, he found a relationship therein with art; the largeness of thought became largeness of feeling, of internal harmony—it

became music. If he saw a picture, a piece of sculpture, a landscape ; if he read poetry, which found an echo within—these were translated in his soul. “*Il Spozalizio*,” “*Il Penseroso*,” “*Au Lac de Wallenstädt*,” “*Une Fantaisie d'après une Lecture de Dante*,” &c. And as his spirit strove for height and breadth, and thence fetched his impressions, these, musically translated, extended his sentiment in height and breadth, and affording him material, developed varied and ever-extending feelings which carried him beyond the sphere of lyrical music. He drew his inspirations alike from heaven and the world.

At that time his musical nature was receptive ; but reception is an inward form of mind which excludes outward activity or only relegates it to the background ; and thus it was that he composed little, not, as the press spread abroad, “from a want of creative power,” an error which the richness and many-sidedness of his works have completely contradicted—but owing to his overpowering impressions, which he was obliged to bring to subjection before he could condense them to an independent work of art.

Still another less philosophical reason, but one that is connected with Liszt’s mission in the history of music, prevented him from expressing himself in the form of great original

creations : his inner life of harmony was composed of materials as yet not ripe for expression through music.

In former years the musical instincts of the world had leaned to the classical form, which had reached a high standard of perfection ; but this point attained, the ideal which had developed itself in the hearts of nations, fettered in spirit, commenced to fade away. A new day dawned. The advancing spirit of the world tore the bandage from the eyes of mankind. New ideals arose on the horizon of art, and with them new modes of expression ; but the means to bring these to perfection were yet to be developed. The spirit of the time is like genius : dream, presage, formation—only when *it has become* can it be comprehended.

New fancies coming to the surface in music through the Romanticists, created for themselves new forms and means of expression. Liszt had developed his inner life by the ideas of recent times, his spirit was filled with them ; but he had more extended aims than his compeers of the years 1830-1840. He outwinged them in the breadth and height, while the many-sidedness of his spiritual life created for him *nuances* and beauties, which remained strangers to the others. But these flashes of genius which were to find artistical expression and

continue were yet lying in embryo. It was dream, presage, formation, and had still to develop and clear itself to individuality within him before he could come to a distinct and mature revelation of himself through a work of art. Liszt's course of development was other than that of most musical artists. In this lies the cause of his lateness as a composer.

The history of art has few, if indeed any examples in the domain of music, wherein an artistic genius in the full swing of mental activity, and in the midst of exciting historical events, has restrained itself with all its organism, and with such warm and faithful fervour as Liszt has done.

Not that by these words I would place him higher than a Palestrina, a Bach, or a Handel, than a Gluck, a Haydn, or a Mozart, or all those other *Meisters* who are reckoned among the intellectual giants of their age, reflecting its contents in their work. The remark is only to show on what is founded the *necessity* of the difference in his artistic expressions, and, above all, of his artistic course of development, with which latter the greater part of the prejudices that meet him as a composer are connected. Every great man has a flash of genius peculiar to himself; he has also a process of mental development which is alike his own. Beethoven's inner

world was formed in another manner than Haydn's; Haydn's otherwise than Gluck's. In each the keynote of the spirit was different, and in each the course of development of this keynote corresponds to its historical destination; and with them all the impulse to composition appeared early and in an exclusive manner. With Liszt it was otherwise, his historical destination not being the same as that of the earlier *Meisters* whose faculties were different from his.

The manner in which the individual life of an artist attains height and depth, inclining either to the ideal or the real, or receives narrow or wide dimensions, how it is connected with the outer or with the inner world, with the present, the past, the future—that decides the originality of his process of development. But just in this originality, in which an infinitude of invisible threads meet and interlace in the secret play of the spirit, lies the peculiar kind of talent and of genius, as well as the manifestation thereof in contrast to the mass of men who represent art in general, a point of view which is often exposed to be misunderstood. Hence arise those mistaken ideas which meet *him* who is more highly gifted than his contemporaries and the world which surrounds him, which is incapable of understanding, or only to a certain degree,

that peculiarity of being is the being itself. In the "not being able to go beyond one's self" lies the enigma which condemns the human spirit to finite bounds, and cleaves its want of capability into a thousand mistakes, and a thousand times excuses them; from it arises the frequent misunderstanding of the great and the significant, also the explanation of the "Crucify him!" Hence it comes that the world *will* have the fully visible and tangible. The germ which works underneath troubles them little. The signs by which the pioneering genius, the prophet, announces himself, are factors which they never will or can count, and the less the farther off they stand: these are incomprehensible things. But, always inclined to make up the sum total, men confound what *is* with what *is to be*, take the *first* for the *last*, and thus draw false conclusions, and consequently heap error on error with regard to genius: debt on debt, which they bequeath to be paid by posterity.

Liszt's contemporaries have in this way delivered over much to their posterity, which the latter have to settle with him as a composer. The first error they committed was that they took what lay in the originality of his course of development for the thing itself. That he did not write great works in those years, like other

composers, they attributed to creative incapacity, an error which the following decades repeated with a hundred variations, all traceable to one and the self-same cardinal misconception. That the higher musical power of production could manifest itself through other forms than those of composition was a thought that, when the virtuoso Liszt began his career, was disregarded in judging of his productive capacity. His transformation of pianoforte playing was viewed as a technical peculiarity, serving to give lustre to the virtuoso: as an affair of the fingers, not that of a spirit under the command of creative power, framing itself a speech for the mighty moods which sought expression. They recognized, it is true, the virtuoso by the grace of God, and allowed to his fancy the productive capacity which one admits to such, that of a technical genius. But the phrase, "he cannot compose," was especially hurled by his opponents, and always as a cadence appended to the admissions made to his virtuosoship.

This view was farther confirmed by his transfers to the pianoforte—the reproductive side of his translative nature. "One transfers only when one cannot produce." So universal experience judged. But they overlooked that when the youth transferred *Paganini's violin* and *Berlioz's orchestra* to the piano, he thereby

extended its means of expression, and gained entrance to a new phase into which pianoforte playing and pianoforte music entered. They could not at that time see what those and many other transfers were for his development as a composer; how they opened up to him a new means of musical art, a theoretically technical learning of its effects; that they were material by which his spirit should express itself; they could only come to understand this afterwards, when he was in full maturity, and former periods were spread out to be viewed and proved as finished and concluded.

And the public opinion of the time adopted the refrain of his antagonistic admirers, "He cannot compose!"

XV.

EROS AS A CHILD OF THE ROMANTIC.

Love ideals of the Romantic poets. George Sand their chief apostle. Liszt's connection with her. Leone Leoni. Influence on Liszt. His ideal of woman.

As the ideals of progress of the years 1830-35 had caused the youth's spirit-life to vibrate in the direction of art, so their Romanticism had awakened the human chords within him, which were likewise to be important for him and for his future. Liszt was at that age when the excitement and passion of the fancy not only take possession of intellectual materials, but also authorize earthly longing, loving, and desiring, when the passions awake in both directions, and cradle themselves on their dangerous heights, the power of one seemingly increased by that of the other. There are natures whose passions and errors, borne up by the might of spiritual powers, only appear in the splendour of poetry—natures which, unconscious of the interior double play of truth and illusion, make

the fancy a factor of reality, and reality a factor of fancy, weaving both together and so raising to a truth the poetic fiction that "invention can be life, and life invention."

Liszt belonged to these natures, and he was at an age when the passions reign supreme ; he was, too, surrounded by the air of Romanticism, playing with powerful fancy the double game of truth and illusion.

Romanticism sought to penetrate from the domain of art into that of practical life, but it met with an opponent in the shape of well-ordered and regulated circumstances, full of immeasurable yearnings after such as should place no opposing barriers before subjective sentiment, and consequently in this case took a turn which could be of as little duration as in the artistic and social domain, but nevertheless its consequences had an important bearing on the future. As the poetical stormers of progress thought to solve one part of the problem which occupied humanity by socialism and communism, so fantastical Hotspurs and poets, no less stormy than they, hoped to have found the solution for another part of this problem—that of love and marriage—by a free style of reforms, and by the glorification of a theory of love which sets up the blind force of nature in the place of morality. The errors of the St. Simonians,

called forth by the heated fancy of Père Enfantin, their continuation by Fourier's "Phalanstère," were entirely the *historical* expression of romantic yearning inflamed to morbid desire, which sought after new circumstances, new ideals, and new times, but which, like over-ripe fruit on the tree of fantastic sentiment, was already in a state of inward rottenness. We named these errors an "historical" expression; for it is not to be mistaken—the homage which that time offered, as well in poetry as in life, to a love bound neither by law nor morality, is not merely the unmeasured expression of morbidly excited spirits. These were only the bearers of an epoch of French history which, rending asunder the chains of formalism, opposed to the despotism of an older time, its opposite, a boundless freedom, and, looking at the evil gnawing at the very being of love and marriage, did not oppose without reason.

To realize this one must transplant one's self back to the former centuries ruled by form and constraint, to the barbarous marriage laws which existed in the middle ages concerning the rights of women and the thousand unhappy conflicts between man and wife arising from them; one must read the literary-historical chapter devoted to this subject and turn the leaves in the book of daily life, to be able to

understand the requirements of Romanticism ; how that the spirits which represent it, apparently so arrogant, are identified with time and with history, and form *one* composition with them, though partly belonging to the æsthetics of ugliness. One must have read the "Delphine" and "Corinne" of Madame de Staël, a woman with strongly marked moral understanding and great genuine human feeling, in order to become acquainted, in the complaints which she hurls against "society," with its heartless trade in souls and tyrannical marriages of convenience, with its victims of arrogance and vanity and its frivolous play with morality, with the elements which had awakened and nourished that longing for a new theory of love. Then one can also comprehend that not only desultorily gifted minds, but also noble, harmonious natures, turn their sympathies to these questions. Take, for instance, the German Wilhelm von Humboldt, who, as it appears from his literary remains, was inclined to St. Simonianism, to the no small astonishment of his worshippers.

"*La femme libre* and *l'homme libre*—the Church should have nothing to say, and not even the State." Thus wrote Varnhagen von Ense in his journal, affrighted at this direction of his friend's ideas, which yet were by no

means new in Germany, where they had already, on the borders of this and the former century, taken root and found literary expression in Friedrich von Schlegel's "Lucinde" (1799). This work, which borrowed its mantle from æsthetics, and under cover thereof preached the "Emancipation of Physis," is as little a manifestation apart from its time as the apotheosis of sensuality of French Romanticism. Even Schleiermacher in his time has spoken a word for it; and, indeed, the most eminently intellectual personages of Germany, both men and women, have taken part in the idea of the demoniac power of love. The "Musenhof" of Weimar gives sufficient proof of this. Partly the fondling of an epoch which, in the violence of effervescence, thought to set all the conditions of life and all human connections on a new, fairer, and humane foundation; partly a consequence of that direction of the "philosophical age" which found its expression in Voltaire, as well as a consequence of natural science, flourishing ever more and more and exercising a mental supremacy — *the romantic mood* had, with these ideas, taken possession of a problem which through all times has tied the tragic knot of the human heart and will outlast all generations. But, in blind zeal, they turned not only against the prejudices

which threaten the very being of love, against the frivolous play of *convenance*, not only against the barbarism of the laws humiliating to women, but also against that *something* which affords protection to human society from the inborn tragedy of the heart: against *morality*. Romanticism preached the sovereignty of the *I*, and required for the individual the sovereignty of enjoyment, without regard to others or to social order in general. The heart of Romanticism was egotism, which, clothed in the splendidly gleaming garb of poesy, full of morbid longing, had mistaken *Physis* for *Psyche*. Nevertheless the desires of Romanticism bore this fruit—they made society conscious of the exterior causes of an infinitude of the sorrows and misery of human life. Their theories could bring no solution to the problems of the heart which, in all times, will belong to the moral strength of the individual to solve and to bind, but they have, though in part only *negatively*, yet undoubtedly, worked and are still working at our present and future human tasks—at the process of purifying the thought of love and marriage, at a remodelling of the laws more in accordance with the human aims of Christianity, at the vanquishing of prejudices which the history and traditions of the middle ages have heaped on the head of woman. Let

us not therefore brand those individual spirits which, all fire and glow, have, it is true, mingled truth and error, but which none the less were the instruments of history.

When, stirred and unchained by the July Revolution, French Romanticism, entering a stage of excitement, occupied itself with the problems of love and marriage, it found allies and champions in this direction in the youthful and in part highly talented *literati* and poets, the born enemies of prose and of the strutting morality of everyday life. What the systems of Enfantin and Fourier never would have attained, these bold dare-devils did attain. Led on by the beautiful, loosely girt, and wildly tressed child of Berry, whose large eye streamed forth ideal enthusiasm and the glow of passion, on whose lips floated the language of classical beauty, and whose brow bore the burning sign of genius, they threw lighted torches into fantastically excited minds, and kindled a firebrand on the domain of Eros and Hymen which could neither be quenched nor kept back in its wide-spreading glow by the indignation of criticism. It was the mood of the time itself which hurried, fleet of foot, through the lands.

The domain of Romance brought forth a wealth of fictions the subjects of which were taken from the dark side of erotic connections

and the misunderstandings arising from the laws, from *convenience* and calculation. Unhappy marriages; the servitude of women; the hate of love and the glow of love; wild, destructive passions; the rebellion of highly gifted—for the most part artistic—natures against morality and law; the keenest dissonances and dissensions of the heart with itself and the world and God—these things form the contents of all these fictions, representing a wild tragedy of unchained passions, in which the wounded and deeply excited feelings yearn in vain for a reconciliatory solution of the dissonances into pure harmonies. The sovereignty of the *I* knows no reconciliation. But the passions and glowing sensuality were represented in a language so intoxicatingly beautiful, with such spontaneous pathos mixed with genuine nobility of mind and ideality of sentiment, that, ensnaring fancy and judgment, they took captive a great part of the society of the day.

The chief representatives of this direction are the first romances of George Sand, the genial, fire-eyed child of Berry. Her romances, "Indiana," "Jacques," "Lelia," and "Leone Leoni," are the most prominent of the outpourings of her talents and of her passions, which, nevertheless, are closely allied with the over-excited feeling of Christian love at that time declaring

itself, a mixture of sentiment and of fancy through which they move, as the literary historian Kreyssig¹ expresses it "in the same bypaths of erroneous feeling, with the romantico-Catholic renewers of the world, in the same delusion concerning freedom and arbitrary will, in the same falling off of the demoniac force of nature from the discipline of reasoning mind."

"Love," says the authoress, "is Christian compassion concentrated on a single being. It belongs to the sinner, and not to the just; only for the former is it moved restlessly, passionately, and vehemently. When thou, O noble and upright man," she continues, with deceitfully fantastic warmth, "when thou feelest a violent passion for a miserable fallen creature, be reassured that is genuine love; blush not therefore! so has Christ loved those who crucified him." According to this view, the love that sins from love must be virtue. One can scarcely be alarmed then when she says, "The greater the crime, so much the more genuine the love which it accomplishes;" or, when Leone Leoni, steeped in passion and crime, but talented and adorned with manly beauty, exclaims to his beloved, "As long as you hope for my amendment you have never loved my

¹ Kreyssig, "Studien zur französischen Literatur-und Kulturgeschichte."

personal self." It also appears to correspond with this casuistry of erotic fancy, when the heroes of her tragedies, of sky-storming earnestness, but adorned with all unnatural qualities, give themselves up to the latter as to an intoxicating spell, and in the delirium of self-delusion hold sin for virtue, and the unnatural for higher truth and beauty. Thus, as Kreyssig also says, the favourite type of George Sand's heroes might proceed from her theory of love, as a "negative pole:" the humble, silent, unregarded "Friend" consuming with secret love; the "en cas que" of the loving heroine — a Brackenburg with higher powers — these Ralphs, Jacques, Bustamenti, and others, who stand watch at the rendezvous of the favoured scapegraces, fight for the honour of the faithless wife or mistress, pay her debts, take her ill-fame on themselves, put an end to their lives to keep her company, or, perchance alone, not to be in the way, and in the most favourable case, are transcendently happy to feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

The new gospel not only adorned its favourites with the heroic virtues of martyrdom, but also found a sanction for the vacillations and unfaithfulness of the heart.

Love (it is said in "Lelia") consists in the holy striving of our ethical being after the unknown. *Therefore seeking heaven*

we waste our strength on a being unequal to us. Then the veil falls and the creature shows itself behind the cloud of incense, pitiful and imperfect, and we blush at our ideal and tread it under foot. And now we seek another, for *love we must!* but we deceive ourselves often again, till at last we give up love in this world.

As a consequence of this doctrine, the view appeared, on the practical side, that the laws of marriage should bind man and wife only transiently—a view which, though in quite another connection and with other aims than those of French Romanticism, had also been touched by Goethe in his “Wahlverwandtschaften.” Marriage, opined by the German poet in reference to the tragedies which are often developed through the union being for life, should be concluded only for five years, to be renewed by contract, then neither side would grow slack in the endeavour to make the happiness and retain the affection of the other. Goethe’s proposal—of course with the principle of reward and punishment in the background abstracting from the freewill of moral reason—aimed at the preservation, beautifying, and deepening of love. But the new view, arising from the Gallo-Romance blood, had other aims than those of the Germanic direction. “All love exhausts itself,” it is said, also, in “Lelia;” disgust and sadness follow; the union of the woman with the man should therefore be transitory. And .

as the Romanticists turn things upside down, she sees in the marriage laws only the “deification of selfishness, which wishes to possess and keep for itself alone.” “That law of moral marriage in love,” she affirms boldly, “is as silly, as laughable before God, as at present the law of social marriage is to men.”

These ideas, spread abroad through George Sand’s first works, and confusing the feeling for morality and truth, exercised an infatuating power by the charm of poetic beauty in which they were wrapped. The intoxicating essences of spontaneous passions which streamed from them were eagerly sucked in by the youth of Paris thirsting for freedom, especially by the poets and artists, who were designated by the words “la Bohème.” Her fictions contained for them a new gospel. The mystical element which the doctrine of the demoniac power of love contains captivated principally those spirits which had a poetically mystic, religious tendency. Their confused feelings believed these magnetic sparks to be an emanation of the divine spirit, and so these fictions had for their time the sad consequence of carrying to its height, on the erotic side, that romantic confusion of feeling and of fancy which Chateaubriand’s “Génie du Christianisme” had already expressed, and which in particular had found

food and development through Lord Byron's sky-soaring and yet sceptically frivolous muse. It was in vain that the authoress, a genuine child of Apollo, sought to free herself from the tendency and sophism of sensual passion ; that she repudiated these mischievous firstlings of her muse,¹ and, like Chateaubriand and his René, wished not to have written them. The youthful were inflamed by this new gospel, they believed in it, they lived after it.

Liszt was also drawn into the vortex. It was fatal for him. Though he could never at any time annihilate the Germanic influences of his education, though the respect and the sentiment of the reason of morality were too strongly innate to be quite denied, yet the youthful impressions which came to him in the shape and in the spirit of a time that destroyed morality and law affected him powerfully enough to educate habits and place them above morality and law when they opposed the passions of his heart.

When young Liszt listened, curious and thirsting for knowledge, to the doctrines of the St. Simonians, no sensual passion had yet drawn him into the worship which Père Enfantin was striving to introduce among his congregation ; but, of course, the doctrines tending in this

¹ "Lettres d'un Voyageur :" à Rollinat.

direction were by no means qualified to unfold his ethical consciousness to clearness and strength, as little as life in Paris itself, as little as the general views concerning law and marriage among the French, so different from those which have arisen from the Christian Germanic culture. The fiery, lighthearted, and chivalrous nature of the Gallo-Roman has from of old found its ideal in *l'amour* and *la gloire*, and transposed *l'amour* into *la gloire* and *la gloire* into *l'amour*. The "gallant adventure" belongs to the vital atmosphere of the Frenchman. His nature has created a character for the relations of both sexes which strives less for the ethical deepening and purifying love through marriage, and marriage through love, than the Germanic nature considers incumbent. Marriage is with the former rather an affair of convenience, arranged by it and etiquette, and love a butterfly, that makes its way through life for itself in the leading-strings of a hot, swelling fancy. With such general views a development, in the German sense, of ethical consciousness and ethical ideality of the individual ceases. In their place stands the sentiment of formal decency, and formal morality.

Though Liszt, by the close communion of his mother, had maintained and partly cultivated the Germanic sentiments, yet in a life such as

that which surrounded him they could not become a power strong enough to give a counterpoise to French views in general, and especially to the romantic evangelium of love. He was at that stage of youthful excitement when "images persuade and metaphors convince, when tears are proofs, and the consequences of enthusiastic rapture are preferred to wearying arguments."

Personal intercourse with the poets standing at the head of the Romantic evangelium, Jules Sandeau, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, and many others, and above all with George Sand herself, contributed as well as their writings fully to unite with the spirit of the times his violently oscillating feelings, already under the influence of Romanticism. Fancy seized the sceptre, the paradox of the favourite hero of George Sand's muse haunted him, the proposition of the demoniac power of love as an expression of its highest being appeared to him truth ; and so its false shadows entered in and mixed as *ignis fatui* with his striving for interior nobleness.

It was 1834 when the connection with George Sand began, unhappily full of significance for the youth's ideal of love. She had just returned from her Italian journey. Her name, through the passionate attacks and enthusiastic defence

of her opponents and friends, not less than by the firebrands she had cast at morality and prescription, had suddenly become celebrated, and the glory of genius began to shine around her. It was at this time that Alfred de Musset, at her own wish, introduced the fiery young artist to her. From that period Liszt was for some years in close intercourse with her. He was reckoned among her intimate friends, whose connection was covered by the word *kameradschaftlich*, a word that had become fashionable since Balzac's romance "Camaraderie,"¹ but which is not here to be understood in the sense of journalistic clique, as in Balzac, but rather in the meaning applied to it by George Sand, of unlimited confidential conversations. The false ideality of those years saw in such an intimacy, even in the friendship between man and woman, the expression of a lofty soul.

In this personal intercourse there lay a fatally corrupting influence, more dangerous for the youth than her works themselves; for false theories learnt from books do not penetrate so immediately as those which are transferred to practice. It is a remarkable fact in this personal connection, that at no time a hearty sympathy

¹ The report of other connections between Liszt and George Sand, originating through Heinrich Heine in a letter to Laube, but afterwards recalled by him, needs in the present day no further contradiction.

with the authoress developed itself. It was as though the Germanic reminiscences reacted instinctively against her in the depths of his soul. On the day when Alfred de Musset accompanied him to her for the first time he passed an evening in her *salon*; but he had accepted the invitation reluctantly, and an inward coldness did not leave him during the whole evening. He was still at the beginning of his romantic development, and the beautiful, talented, modern Circe filled him with a secret horror.

The first-fruits of George Sand's pen had a corrupting influence over him in like manner as the character of his personal acquaintance with her. His fancy was captivated, but not his feeling for true ethics, just as his intimacy with the authoress could not smother his feeling for Germanic morality—it always broke through all his errors. The effect on his convictions in regard to love and marriage is explained by the great charm which was exercised over his fancy. "Leone Leoni" in particular gave a false direction to his ideals with reference to love and woman's sacrifice. This violently discussed romance—which appeared in 1834—which glorifies absolute love in itself, independently of esteem: "As long as you hope for my amendment you have never loved my peculiar being!" cries Leone to Julietta. He saw in words such

as those quoted only bold, proud, manly love standing by its own strength ; but the blasphemy which they hurled in the face of ethics and of lofty truth, the moral degradation of the woman which they contain, he would not see. Julietta was for him the type of ideal feminine love. He beheld in her only that quality of the woman at all times raised to an ideal by poets and artists—an unconditional love which believes, hopes, and suffers all ; but he did not recognize that the moral strength was wanting from which the true dignity and inner beauty of the sex spring. That ideal might have floated before George Sand when she created her Julietta, but she saw it only in the concave mirror of the time, hence this unsightly caricature of genuine womanly love. Julietta serves only as a foil to the triumph of demoniac passion, as represented in *Leone Leoni*.

Liszt often obstinately defended passages like those cited, yet as often from inward partizanship, pleasure in paradox, and a chivalrous feeling for woman as from mental blindness.

But he not only defended George Sand, he showed her also other friendly services. At the time that "*Leone Leoni*" appeared in the columns of the "*Revue des deux Mondes*," Liszt was the mediator between the authoress and his friend Gustave Planché, the dreaded

critic and collaborator of that journal. This latter was very indignant at the contents of this romance, and also at its artistic execution, and said the most cutting words to Liszt about George Sand's want of true formative power, which conjured up shadows, but prevented the creation of life-like characters ; but the blinded youth, fascinated by the flowery charm and eloquent language which the authoress had unfolded, attributed the contempt with which the critic treated this romance less to its ethical than to its literary defects.

The spirit of Romanticism, however, which the young artist drew in in these literary circles was united with a heart-passion, and gave there-to its direction and character. He now lived through the most varied stages of romantic delusion—lived through them to that point when truth must discover the hollowness of the infatuation, yet is unable to efface its traces.



XVI.

IN THE SALON.

[Paris, 1832-1835.]

The Parisian *salons* of the elegant and distinguished world.
The god Amour. The Countess Laprunarède.

NOTHING was better fitted to develop the Romanticism of the heart, with its coquettish play, its concealed passions, and countless cadences of falsehood than the Parisian *salon*—the stage on which the Romanticism of the poets sought to perform its loftiest actions, and exercised its *esprit* by going through the fiery trial of its genius. The *salon*, with its gleam of tapers and splendid toilettes, its more or less famous personages of society of the day, with its sparkling wit and its seeking after intellectual entertainment, lent to romance in practice a luxuriance and a poetic charm. It was a stage where knots were tied and untied in play, and mysteries fluttered in the side-scenes like dragonflies and butterflies in a sunshiny meadow; there were *aventures* and heroes and

heroines not less piquant and full of erotic charms than those of the side-scenes of a real theatre; with this difference only, that the heroines of the latter wanted the plot-weaving means of Romanticism, which placed rank, wealth, opportunity, and the fear of an *éclat* at the disposal of the *salon* society exclusively for their *intrigues d'amour*.

But the Parisian *salon* had also its importance in the history of civilization. It was not with the French, as with other nations, a social assembling to dedicate the leisure hours of the day to the play of good humour, it was rather a kind of propaganda, a centre for politics, for the Church, for the fine arts, for "society;" but its tone always bore the stamp of the elegant and intellectual world; it was at once splendid, ambitious, power-seeking, sparkling with wit. The history of the *salon* is the history of civilization and political changes in France through more than a hundred years, from the intellectual reign of the Encyclopedists to the second half of our century, when Louis Napoleon performed his *coup d'état*, called by Victor Hugo a *crime*,¹ and a former world fell to pieces in the passage to a new political and social *régime*. At the present day the importance of the Parisian *salon* is only an empty tradition. The meetings in

¹ "L'Histoire d'un Crime."

drawing-rooms of the *spirituelle* Princess Dorothea von Liewen, for many years the friend of the statesman Guizot, were the last of those which are interwoven with the history of France.

These *salons* were formed in the circles which surrounded the throne, as well as in those of poets and *savants*—a legacy of the “philosophical century,” with its dialectic understanding, its Rousseau dreams, and the tradition of that genuine distinction which bloomed under the Bourbon dynasty, with its diadem “Noblesse oblige” on its brow. But it was always women distinguished for wit and beauty who formed their head and centre, and exercised an influence over the high-born and intellectual world to the development and extension of literature. They chatted, wrote verses and letters, and raised their *salon* to a muses’ court, where talent was nurtured and celebrated, where poets were brought up, applauded, and crowned, and where courtesy was cultivated to a degree of delicacy that wore the semblance of a virtue of the heart. In the old French *salons* of high society—as Frau von Staël, who here schooled her mind in the most exquisite circles, relates—without frivolity, and without prudery, they treated of the highest interests, the wish to please spurring on the mind, reining in the passions, and making conversation an art and a charm.

During the epoch of the Restoration this spirit still lived, or rather revived. The terrors which the year 1789 had inflicted on the Bourbons seemed to the old distinguished French society of the Faubourgs St. Germain and St. Honoré an evil dream that ended on the island of St. Helena. They lived over again the fair traditions of the elegant and *spirituelle* world. Duchesses and princesses wrote and read their poems, they played and listened to music, challenged arts and artists of conservative principles, taking the modern spirit into account, only as far as it remained in the kingdom of humane dreams, which glided by aristocratic tradition without touching it. The *spirituelle* Duchesse de Duras wrote her novels, of which her "Ourica" bore away the palm from her "Ollivier" and "Edward." The contents, the principles which—opposed to the elastic views of the younger generation in regard to the nobleness of birth and its unsubvertible barriers—held fast to tradition and attacked the mischief of *mésalliances*, delighted the old French nobility no less than the royal-minded citizen. "Ourica" was the fashion; they wore Ourica colours and Ourica ribbons,¹ from a sentiment

¹ "Ourica" (the negress) was so much the mode that in Paris a colour—a deep shining grey, like the negro complexion—was named after her, and the toilettes of the elegant world, for a long time, were not perfect without it. White and red figures were

of delicate courtesy for the distinguished authoress, as well as for a sign of loyal and conservative opinions. In these circles, Madame de Staël's "Corinne" and "Delphine" were the predecessors of a new epoch, with worthier thoughts concerning the aspirations of the heart. In the intellectual *salons*, especially in those of the Faubourg St. Germain, they sought to keep all innovations afar, as well as the elements which did not belong to the good old society. They were very exclusive here in the affairs of literature and art, and in the choice of the persons they received. The literary authority in this circle was Chateaubriand.

They were less exclusive, in both directions, in the literary *salons* of the younger generations. The Duke of Orleans, afterwards the "Citizen-king," had, as it were, given the signal for this. In the Palais royale one saw Thiers, Guizot, Royer-Collard, Casimir Périer, and many other men of weight and importance. But in the Faubourg St. Germain they said of these evenings, *On n'y connaissait personne*, and held back. The *salons* outside the two *faubourgs* had a mixture of the elements of modern mind.

also worn in ribbons and stuffs to represent the colours of the negroes' teeth and lips. The novel found also its literary after-production: Paul Heyse took from it the materials for his novel in verse.

When the year 1830 began its work, and the "aristocracy of mind" celebrated the victory of intelligence, artists, and poets, the heroes of the day and of the time, were seen in free intercourse in *salons* of the most different tendencies. Only in the Faubourg St. Germain they kept *tournure*, and remained intellectual in the old style; but the *salons* were, in general, more or less the rendezvous of partizans either in politics, or in the arts. Romanticism especially entered at every door, and knew how to procure a key for each. But wherever they penetrated—into the Faubourg Saint Germain or Saint Honoré, or the Chaussée d'Antin, or into the elegant circles of the *haute bourgeoisie*—beauty, courtesy, wit, bore the sceptre.

Liszt had moved in all these circles as a pianist. He was naturalized in the Faubourg St. Germain. Here he had solemnized his first triumphs as a youthful phenomenon, here he had been "*le petit prodige*," to whom they had offered the *bonbonnière*, and whose cheeks they had stroked; here he had begun his career of instruction; here he was now "*le grand prodige*," not less, though in another way, the spoiled child of the world of noble ladies. Here he now spake at the piano the language of Romanticism, himself every inch a Romanticist. He played from Berlioz's "*Episode d'un Artiste*"

the “Marche au Supplice,” “L’Idée fixe,” the “Scène du Bal;” he introduced, too, Chopin’s Mazurkas, and wove his own *idées fixes* into his performances; declaimed at the piano warm-heartedly and soaringly, as he declaimed in the journals; spoke in tones of his ideals, of his hopes, and longings, and, converting the poetry of the aristocratic *salons* into music, dramatized into monologue and dialogue the sentiments which stormed within him—the little skirmishes into which, perhaps, the caprice or the coquetry of a countess, or a marchioness, had just drawn him. Sullen, stormy, ironical, imploring, proud, knightly—his *tones* said it all. Now and then he threw playful-sounding balls of fire among the listening fair ones; now and again he received small arrows shot at him from fire-darting eyes; but in the Parisian *salons*, Amor was the enchanting, the sportive, seldom the “terrible God,” as Theocritus called him; his arrows missed, and did not always wound, and few were struck mortally.

One of them, however, hung more firmly than the others. It came from the sparkling, witty, coquettish Comtesse Adèle Laprunarède (*née* de Chelérd), afterwards Duchesse de Fleury, who sought in the elegant circles of the Faubourg St. Germain to indemnify herself for the *ennui* she suffered in the country by the side

of an already very elderly count, her husband ; and she was still so young, so beautiful, so full of life and gaiety, so richly gifted !

This arrow did not sit very firmly, it is true, but fast enough for one whole winter, to allure him from Paris to the fortress-like castle situated in the Alps,¹ which the countess inhabited with her husband. Here, with him and his young wife and a very aged aunt of the latter, he passed several months—a whole winter, indeed—doubly a prisoner. For not only did the fiery eyes, the cheerful, coquettish manner, and the cultivated mind of the Comtesse Laprunarède exercise their enchantment, outside, too, the storm roared, the wind howled, and the snow fell in masses ; all the roads were blocked up, and the inhabitants of the castle lived inaccessible to others, like the princes and princesses of fairy tales in an enchanted ice-bound palace, waiting for the spring, whose warm breath should unbolt its closed doors.

But within all was comfortable. The chimney-fire crackled and its sparks mixed with the flashing word-combats which sprang from the golden cheerfulness of youth, and the consuming fire of love. They laughed, jested, read, played, and when the approaching spring kissed away snow and ice from doors and paths,

¹ Castle Marlroz, near Geneva.

the young artist journeyed back towards Paris, his heart full of the romance of love.

A zealous correspondence was kept up between him and the Comtesse—Liszt's first “exercises in the lofty French style,” as he afterwards jestingly told us; but in Paris they knew nothing of this *tête-à-tête*. Its heroes maintained the profoundest silence, the veil of sweet mystery. His biographers mention no syllable of it. They only say, in general, that Liszt sometimes lived quite retired from the world, and became invisible. Only D'Ortigne appears to have had a suspicion of this *aventure d'amour*. His words, “Men of the world saw a new passion behind this disappearance,” leave us to guess as much.

The romantic bud of passion had here opened in the youth's life—not surrounded by Germanic-Gretchen poesy, but by the narcotic principles of the Gallo-romantic character, in which women hold the scroll of enchantment in their hands to teach the language of passion to youth—the romantic language of love. The Germanic speaks more from the holy dream of the heart—that was dead within him. Now he had breathed the poetry of the side-scenes of *haut ton*. When next winter—that of 1833-34—the aristocratic *salons* again opened, and the youth, whose nature in the meantime had be-

come more inflamed and amiably eccentric, was again worshipped and celebrated, the play of arrows began again. And now a shaft penetrated his soul.

Amor, the "terrible god," had guided the hand which sent it.

XVII.

MADAME LA COMTESSE D'AGOULT
(DANIEL STERN).

[Paris 1834-1835.]

Her parents. Youth. Natural characteristics. Her connection with Liszt.

FRANZ LISZT was in the bloom of youth—not yet three and twenty years old—when the woman whose name this chapter bears entered into his life. She was beautiful, this woman—very beautiful, endowed with the rarest charms of mind and body. She had a right to call herself in her “Souvenirs” a *Lorelei*; she had certainly a right, in every sense.

The Countess d'Agoult has drawn the eyes of the world upon her in many ways, as a Romanticist and as an authoress, the latter under the name of Daniel Stern; and at this very hour—1877—she stands before the world in her “Souvenirs”¹ as it were the last flickering of a departed, nimbus-seeking spirit. She was

¹ “Mes Souvenirs,” by Daniel Stern (Madame d'Agoult). Paris : Colman Lévy, ancienne Maison Michel Lévy frères, 1877.

a daughter of the emigrant Vicomte Flavigny, a scion of a family of the ancient French nobility. Like most of his manly race, he also wore a sword. He was still a youth when the Revolution broke out, and drove him, with so many of his rank, over the French border. He turned his steps to the German free city, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, which was still surrounded by a gleam of the old imperial glory. The choice of this town was not without an especial aim ; his residence was to give an opportunity to recruit soldiers for the French army, under the commission of the Prince Louis de la Fremoille, a commission which brought him into conflict with the Frankfort magistracy, and finally to a prison.

But Amor and Hymen favoured the ardent young officer. He had been introduced into the most influential families of the imperial city, and had awakened a passionate affection in the heart of a beautiful widow of eighteen. She was a daughter of the rich and proud banker, Simon Maurice Bethmann, who was no ways inclined to favour this flame, and accept the young Frenchman as a son-in-law ; but what papa and mamma would not, the daughter knew how to carry out. When the young cavalier was taken into custody, she shared his imprisonment ; there remained no-

thing more for the parents to do but to use their influence with the magistrates to procure his freedom, and no longer withhold from them the blessing of the church.

His wife's fortune now rendered the viscount independent, and he lived with her—the marriage took place in 1797—alternately, for several years, in Frankfort, Munich, Dresden, Vienna, and other German towns, and like all exiles, full of enthusiasm and fidelity to the exiled Bourbons, was always ready to follow every call of his country to restore the old order of things.

At last, in 1809, home sickness led him back to France. He purchased an estate in Touraine, to which he added several others, and gave himself up to his aristocratic passions ; especially hospitality towards his equals in rank, and exiles, and to the pleasures of the chase and of fishing. After the fall of Napoleon he passed the winter season for the most part in Paris with his family. Already, in Germany, his wife had presented him with three children, of whom only two lived to grow up : a boy, Maurice de Flavigny, who afterwards distinguished himself in the Chambers on the conservative side ; and a girl, afterwards Comtesse d'Agoult, who was born in Frankfort in 1805.

Vicomte de Flavigny, now settled in his native land, devoted only a worldly solicitude to the education of his children. The young Vicomte was placed in an educational establishment destined for young men of rank, the little Vicomtesse, already of enchanting loveliness and grace, was educated in the paternal mansion. Not by governesses. When the Vicomte and his family lived in the country at Chateau Mortier, he and his wife undertook the intellectual culture of the little girl, without any farther educational assistance. She was almost always near them. She drove out with her mother, she went into the wood to fish with her father. Her mother read German fairy-tales to her, and instructed her in music; her father tried to transfer to her his encyclopedic knowledge, and dictated stories from the Greek and Roman mythology, as well as, and more particularly, passages from Voltaire. Her mother spoke German with her, her father French. This was her education whilst in the country. When the family were in Paris, she followed a course of instruction which the Abbé Gautier had instituted for the children of the aristocracy of the Faubourg St. Germain, whereby, though superficially enough, the gaps were in some measure filled up which the parental instruction had left. Here in Paris she was also schooled

for the *parquet* of the great world by instruction in dancing and etiquette.

The years of her childhood which she passed in this way, partly in the country, partly in Paris, glided away as it were an undisturbed dream. There she lived more like an uncaged bird, seeking sunshine, wood, and meadow green ; here she was under the discipline of well-informed teachers, and of the courtly etiquette indispensable to the inhabitants of the ancient, noble quarter of the city. An enviable, free, sunny childhood ; and yet its charms cannot conceal its defects, and one asks involuntarily, Who taught the child to pray ? and who taught her to love truth ? and when she was more matured, to find the limits of falsehood, to distinguish between right and wrong ? Who nourished the powers of her moral vision ? Unfortunately, in this department, she was left to herself. Her education emphasized the worldly side of life.

When she was thirteen years old she lost her father, and this was not without consequence for her education, for at the end of the year of mourning her mother travelled to Frankfort-on-the-Maine and took the child with her. The residence in her grandfather's house gave her great freedom and distraction. Above her years, both in body and mind, she was treated

like a grown-up young lady, and consequently taken to parties and balls, which were particularly splendid that winter (1820-1821) on account of the ambassadors and *diplomats* of foreign and German courts being assembled for the Diet.

The beautiful young *blondine*, still half a child, and yet chattering wisely, was not unremarked in these circles—they paid her court. A strong impulse was thus given to her youthful vanity, which caused Madame de Flavigny to decide on not taking her daughter with her in a second journey she made to Germany, but to place her during her absence at the former Hôtel Brion, which had been converted into an aristocratic nunnery, to which was attached an educational establishment (April, 1821).

Sacré Cœur de Marie was under the direction of the Jesuits. The religious instruction of the young Vicomtesse, even at the time of her confirmation—she had been received into the Catholic Church—had been very cursory. At the age of eleven, according to custom, she had gone through the ceremony of confirmation, and had kept the Lenten fast. This was the whole of her religious education and devout exercises. She had only gained worldly and social experience.

In the convent they very soon remarked her

perfect indifference for religious things ; but as she was at an age when fancy and feeling are as excitable as they are decisive, she learnt in a short time, under the prudent guidance she here enjoyed, to love the melancholy charms of conventional life—charms which are the more attractive for youthful souls the more they bear within them poetry, a craving for love, and excitability of the senses. She became a zealous Catholic, and it appeared, according to her own account, that her devotion and love for the cloister had awakened great hopes in the convent. At the end of about a year she returned to her mother's house. She was now regarded as a young lady and introduced into the elegant world. Worldly impressions again got the upper hand, yet not unmixed with the poetry and the charm of the religious sentiments which she had brought from the cloister-life into the tumult of the world.

So passed five years, at the end of which she married Count Charles d'Agoult, twenty years older than herself, an officer, whose high nobility and court connection promised her a splendid position. It was a *mariage de convenance* such as are naturalized in the aristocratic circles of all lands. The count, still in the prime of life, was, as regards education and views, entirely devoted to the old French nobility. Regular in his arrangements, punctilious in all affairs of honour,

chivalrous towards women, and liberal towards the weaknesses of the heart, he was severe in his requirements as regarded the honour of his own house, an aristocrat *comme il faut* according to the *régime ancien*. Under these pleasing qualities, however, there lay a good, sound understanding, and a strong will. He was sought in society, yet he shone less through eminent qualities of mind than through a wit that never failed of its aim, the dryness of which awakened and increased the mirth it had occasioned.

The style and character of his marriage corresponded with his aristocratic maxims. Madame la Comtesse represented his house, and by it his name, his position. He showed her the courtesy which the ancient French nobleman never forgot towards his consort either in public or in private; and for the rest, they lived in that formal connection which the tradition of the aristocracy of the eighteenth century brought with it. This neither happy nor unhappy marriage afforded the countess an unrestrained freedom, and unfolded, without being remarked, sides of her natural disposition which would scarcely have appeared in a less conventional marriage, by the side of a husband whom she loved—at least, not to such a degree as to have led to an entire rupture with morality.

As regards these consequences, a less dazzling

exterior would have been a greater favour of destiny than such an alluring beauty. For the Countess d'Agoult was beautiful, very beautiful, a *Lorelei*: slender, of lofty bearing, enchantingly graceful and yet dignified in her movements, her head proudly raised, with an abundance of fair tresses, which waved over her shoulders like molten gold, a regular, classic profile, which stood in strange and interesting contrast with the modern breath of dreaminess and melancholy which was spread over her countenance; these were the general features which rendered it impossible to overlook the countess in the *salon*, the concert-room, or the opera-house, and these were enhanced by the choicest toilettes, the elegance of which was surpassed by few, even in the *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain. That fantastic dreams were hidden behind the purity of her profile, and passion, burning passion, under the soft melancholy of her expression, was known but to few, at the time when her connection with the young artist began.

The Countess d'Agoult, through her friendship with eminent men, was inclined to all sorts of extravagant fancies, while, as an authoress and politician, her efforts bear the stamp of the peculiarly oscillating movements of her nature and life. In the circumstances it is not surprising that she made herself much spoken of—not

always for the best—and yet one might bring forward much in her excuse, without going so far as some have done, as to say that, “to understand all is to forgive all.” In order to judge the Countess d’Agoult rightly, one must not regard her as a being formed either by education, or by self-discipline. She never at any period of her life appeared as possessed of lofty strength, and high self-education. The influences and defects have always remained conspicuous which she received through her parents, her environment, and her education, in which, also, the time, with its romantic tendency, had an essential share.

A hybrid by birth, the most opposite impressions and influences surrounded her from the cradle and were continued through the whole of her youth. The father French, the mother German; the one a Catholic, the other a Protestant; but both, in their ideas, led by the vapid rationalism which then prevailed; on both sides free views of life springing from the peculiar direction of the time, and yet both bound to tradition. There the pride of aristocracy, here the citizen pride of wealth; there, in the background, feudalism breathing from the splendour and traditions of the kingly house, here the sovereign burghership relying on the honour and riches of the old free imperial city—

these were all such strong contrasts that their effects on a young and susceptible mind could not pass without leaving a trace. Great and strong natures, of course, overstep, though often with a struggle, those things which, coming from without, lie between them and their inner self. What is alien to them, brought by education and external circumstances and forced upon them, they shake off with growing consciousness and increasing strength and originality. Small and weak natures, on the contrary, unite with such elements; they shake nothing off, but remain under their influence and scarcely perceive that they have become a part of their nature. It is certain individual dispositions can struggle against things coming from without; but, on the other side, it is quite as sure that they can also succumb.

The latter was no doubt the case with the Countess d'Agoult. Her dispositions, full of contradiction and inconsistency, appear a continuation and an echo of all her birth had laid in her cradle, and all that had lulled her from her entrance into the world, and which it was not in her organization to thrust away. Her spirit was lively, easily excited, yet retaining impressions firmly; her fancy extravagant, but her powers of observation strongly stamped, thirsting for novelty and excitement, without

letting go what was enduring ; strongly accentuated susceptibilities, yet small feeling for deeper perceptions, a weak glance for higher truth ; a restless desire to make an impression, delight in splendour, in the extraordinary, in all that made an effect. Her melancholy temperament wove from these threads a tissue that was spread around her like a poetic veil ; it did not domineer over the several qualities, but lent them a colouring, and prescribed their motions ; it gave a serious, thoughtful demeanour to her lively mind ; it tamed the too great excitability ; it afforded greater strength to her powers of observation ; it laid a veil over the senses. While, too, opposing a certain sedateness to the volatile properties of her nature, and giving her steadfastness of will, it liberated the decided weaknesses of an irregularly balanced mind. Her melancholy ! under this was concealed, like shoals beneath a silent sea, a glow of passionate sensualism.

With such a disposition the deception of her fancy must have been fatal. As a child she had already read many romances. Chateaubriand's writings, Goethe's world-sick "*Werther*" — the godfather of Romanticism — were her favourites, which influenced her imagination and her senses, yet left her heart and feelings untouched as regards sound reality. Where,

in those days, would she have found the latter, when everywhere, at every step she took, she inhaled a romantic atmosphere? Nay, all Paris was a romance. She read, indeed, the works of the Encyclopedists too, which struggle against too much warmth, but these, none the less declaiming against the authority of church dogma, undermined those feelings which, in a nature such as the countess's, would have afforded her protection against herself. She gave the preference, however, to romantic reading, and of course this afforded her incitement enough to carry on a fantastic game with herself, to which the desire to please gave the tone, and a vanity sprang up which derogated from her better qualities. This her "Souvenirs" prove. And as she wrote, so she lived.

Vanity has often been pointed to, and especially now after the appearance of her "Souvenirs," as the mainspring of her actions; and yet, when one thinks how admired, caressed, spoilt she had been from her childhood; how, surrounded by luxury, she lived in an atmosphere where the existence and position of the individual was in some measure bound to the victory of the social *I*, one asks, How, in such circumstances, would it have been possible for her to have been otherwise? Even a morally stronger nature than that of the Countess

d'Agoult would scarcely have escaped from such influences. It appears only natural, therefore, that her vanity and her fancy—the latter too weak to express itself in poetry, too strong to remain inactive—should have raised her to a heroine on the stage of her own life. Her imagination, turning towards herself, received its characteristic colouring from the circle in which she moved. She mirrored in her career the position of her parents, the splendour which was reflected on them from the higher aristocracy, mingled with the former power of the Bourbons, and, finally, the coquetting and ogling with literature, art, and *esprit* as developed in the *salons* of the day.

Yet, contradictorily enough, and a sign of greater talents, she went farther than the superficial dilettantism of the elegant *salon* with its *beaux esprits*. Her sympathy with the questions of the time and of politics, and her "History of the February Revolution," are proofs of this. She was not without strength, not without earnestness, not without feeling for the great and the beautiful ; but the restraining hand of her origin, of her social tendency, of her education lay upon her. With that criticism undeveloped, which partly lies in an inborn feeling of truth, and partly proceeds from the power of observation sharpened to perception

and judgment, she confounded the genuine with the false. Appearance imposed on her more than truth. Encompassed by perpetual delusions, she took pomp and pathos for genuine greatness, external splendour and effect for genuine beauty. If, indeed, we listen to her in her "Souvenirs," those qualities were not wanting ; she was truth-loving and genuine ; even *au fond du cœur* all was humanly beautiful and noble in her ; but with whatever grace and mastery she wraps the drapery about herself, through every fold there shines the desire to be reckoned among the important and the influential—a game of hide-and-seek with herself and the world.

The Countess d'Agoult, the more and the longer one lingers with her, appears to the mental observation like one of those psychologically interesting womanly natures, whose inner existence is made up of a mixture of intellectual ingredients which, in spite of eminent qualities, never arrive at interior transparency, but remain, through all the periods of life, in a medium state which can never come either to the strength of the decidedly good or to that of the absolutely evil ; the one, because their glance is partly weakened, partly troubled, by a superabundant unshorn fancy, self-satisfaction preventing all self-criticism ; the other

because the love of fair appearances is too mighty in them for them to be able to divest themselves of it.

The Countess d'Agoult has also often been accused of hypocrisy, not without reason ; but it may be affirmed that she was not conscious of it ; that, on the contrary, she lived in the delusion of being anything but a hypocrite.

However that may be, the above-mentioned peculiar direction of her intellectual and moral capabilities, as well as her life and writings, will always place her in the ranks of the most interesting and eminent female personages of her "time," even if her literary fame should prove less genuine than it generally appears. We see in her a woman in whom the French Romanticism of that epoch is embodied with the traditional qualities of the empty life of the *haut ton*.

When the connection between the Countess d'Agoult and Liszt began, she might have been about nine and twenty years old. A six years' marriage, from which three children had bloomed, lay behind her. She herself was at the zenith of her beauty, and men and women of rank, name, and talent were seen in her drawing-room. If the dangerous qualities which were to set her at variance with the world and with morality were no longer slumbering, they were, at least, kept within bounds by decorum.

This was the woman, one of the most attractive appearances in the *salons* of the noble and elegant world, who sent the arrow which struck young Liszt with a mortal wound ; she it was who was interwoven with his life for ten long years.

Ten years ! A time protracted enough to lead a youth, still far from manly ripeness and deprived of paternal authority, into ways which pass close by the abyss of interior confusion. It was neither the result of a silently germinating, mutual inclination, gradually ripening to the force of passion, nor the fruit of a fervent communion of heart ; it was a chance, a play, a caprice, a misfortune.

The countess had formerly known “le petit Litz.” At that time she was already a grown-up young lady, who had for some time excited the attention of the gentlemen of the Frankfort Diet, and had finished her education at the “*Sacré Cœur*.” *She*, an aristocrat ; *he*, un petit Bohémien ! She had no farther interest in the ripening youth ; but when his being, ever developing itself more significantly, made him the declared and extolled favourite of the Faubourg St. Germain, and she herself arranged reception evenings, which were to assemble the celebrities of the arts and of literature in her *salon*, the ardent young spirit became the object of her

especial attention. She sought to draw him into her circle, but did not succeed. Either the poetry of the Alpine castle still bloomed within him, or his good genius warned him : he avoided her. This reserve on his part all the more provoked her ; it became a snare for both. Her *esprit*, her beauty, the soft melancholy spread over her being, her charming manners—they came into play and reached their aim : there came an episode in their lives when they avoided each other for weeks, for months.

Then arrived a time in which the young artist was often seen in her *salon*, and he appeared to put into practice the romantic ideals which he had drawn from the poets.

It was at this epoch that his intercourse with George Sand and her friends began. And other intercourse also acted unfavourably ; that of a circle of elegant men of rank and wit—among them the Italian Prince Belgiojoso, remarkable in his time for wealth, beauty, and a life of pleasure—men with whom gallant adventures were particularly the mode. Until then, in spite of the corrupting influences of Parisian life, Liszt's moral feeling had kept awake, but now it seemed as if his good genius would extinguish the torch. He no longer avoided the Countess d'Agoult. What was at first a frivolous flirtation, began to wear another aspect : an unre-

strained passion took possession of them both, and became the link that bound these two opposing natures together. At this moment he seemed to have lost all self-command and power of reflection. But he felt no happiness, only intoxication and discord.

Byron's works, and the writings of Senancourt and Voltaire, were his daily companions. The interior laceration of the one, the world-sorrow of the other, the shots darted at religious belief, all corresponded to his own inner state.

It was at this period in his life that he sought repose with the Abbé de Lamennais. In the presence of this man he seemed nearer to himself: the influence was a good one, and the evil spirits did not haunt him in the peaceful La Chenaie. A deep longing awoke within him. Was it the vale of his childhood? His father so early torn from him? Was it the image of that woman who, "pure as the alabaster of holy vessels," had so deeply impressed his opening mind? Was it a yearning after religious peace? Who can separate the strings which, in moments of excitement, when dark and light are woven together, resound in the human breast? At any rate, this yearning was the crying out of his nobler nature, which demanded clearness and truth, and sought the directing hand of God.

In those days he accomplished his "Pensée des Morts." From it much can be read.

Again in Paris, these moods retired into the background, and the old connections resumed their force. The moral confusion of the poets had risen to its climax. "Leone Leoni" appeared in the columns of the "Revue des deux Mondes," the unchaining and the victory of the "Demon" over virtue, morality, and law, was proclaimed as the beatification of true affection. False ideals appeared genuine to the young artist—there was no more restraint: he was like a ball that has begun to roll. But this surrender to the "passion" untuned his inner harmony, and increased the discord. The stronger the latter grew, the more he sought to give it vent in irony and world-sorrow. But he not only healed the shafts of irony against himself, he engulfed the woman who had taught him the alphabet of passion.

The influence of the young musician over the Countess d'Agoult was not less deadly than was hers over him. Both had the misfortune to contribute to each other's bewilderment. If she unchained his senses, his irony entirely confounded her ethical notions, even without this not too strongly pronounced. The countess had attained her object: the celebrated youth increased the splendour of her *salon*, he did her

homage ; but success enlarged her aims. Even her love had its ideals ; as the embodiment of devoted womanliness floated before Liszt, so before her fancy flitted a picture of worshipped influence-exercising beauty. She dreamed of becoming the muse of the talented youth's art, and did not realize that the materials should be other than sensual pleasure and fantastic vanity. This knowledge of her sentiments goaded on his irony. If his ideals at this period were confused, it arose from a morbid yearning after higher spiritual aims, after the solution of the problems of life. His feeling for truth suffered from this peculiar state of mind ; but it was not extinguished. It rose against the deceitful web of his own weaving, against the mask of virtue and dignity which the countess wore before the world, and ironically he put "*Leone Leoni*" into her hand, and called Julietta a genuine and adorable woman.

Blinded by egotism, which only sought to satisfy itself by such outbursts of a lacerated heart, he did not foresee what mischief he was preparing. His words, unfortunately, only fell on too good a soil. The countess, in her blindness, did not receive them as irony, they did not lead her to self-consciousness, but to still greater blindness. Longing for his admiration, she gradually lost every hold, and what till then had

been such to her—her husband, her children, her position—were now the means of giving him the proof of her love, and supposed greatness of character and ideality; perhaps, too, so ran her ideas, she would prepare a spectacle for the world that should assure her the admiration of great spirits.

In this delusion the Countess d'Agoult seems to be a victim to the morbid direction of the Romanticism of the time. But before the catastrophe arrived, and moral disorder had reached its climax, a moment of repose came for both.

Domestic sorrow in the family d'Agoult had suddenly stayed these waves of passion: the countess stood at the death-bed of one of her children. Full of anxiety and solicitude respecting her darling—for the little Louisa, only six years old, who lay dying in her arms, was a favourite with all—her mother's heart had forgotten its passion; with entire surrender to her loss, she had wept tears of sincere and pure sorrow. Vanity is silent before the face of death, and in the presence of the King of Terrors the passions lay themselves humbly at the feet of the Eternal. Then the heart is fearful. Worldly things, however eagerly desired, grow pale. Tears efface the list of sins, and sorrow spreads his kingly pinions over the

misery which confusion of heart has inflicted on man. True sorrow is the messenger of salvation, an awakener, an exhorter, a washer away of sins. The maternal heart of the Countess d'Agoult was struck, and her mourning spread over her appearance and her whole being a breath of ideal beauty which had a salutary effect on the youth's over-excited frame of mind. He had taken a sincere part in the care and anxiety with which the parents and relatives surrounded the sick bed; he participated in the sorrow that affected all, and when earth was thrown on the heart of the mother's little darling, all the noble chords of his nature vibrated. Passion, with its consequences of irony and bitterness, seemed sunk with the hapless child into the grave.

Soon after this event their former course of life was renewed. But the deceitful game into which Liszt's warm temperament, and the ideals of the Romanticists had drawn him had lost its charm—his nobler self recoiled; he felt that the time for separation had come. The concert season was over, it was the spring of 1835, and this seemed the proper moment. He determined to leave Paris, and hoped that the countess, still in that serious frame of mind induced by her child's death, would also feel the necessity of the step and coincide with him.

He was mistaken. She opposed his wish and would not hear of a separation. Astonished and grieved, he betook himself to a lodging in the suburbs in order to conceal their *liaison* as much as possible. Here she visited him, and here he pursued his studies : reading, writing, and composing in peace.

This concealment did not last long. The countess had formed a plan, and the hour of fulfilment was at hand. She was weary of her rôle as a woman of the world ; weary of being “ *La Corinne du Quai Malaquais* ; ” weary too of the cold politeness and biting irony of the count—nay, weary of all restraint, as it seemed, even that imposed by her duties to her daughter Claire. Her plan was to give up position, husband, child, and home, to leave Paris for some years with Liszt, and to become a wife and mother in a new world. She thought, perhaps, that such a *coup d'éclat* would be a sort of rehabilitation after her many flirtations. At that time an *éclat* was considered by the world-renewing Romanticists as a heroic deed, and Parisian society had already given many examples—among others, that of the Duchess of Piacenza, and the Princess Belgiojoso : she wished perhaps to surpass them.

However much the artist might have been flattered by this *grande passion*, as the countess

called her project, he listened to it with horror, and opposed it violently. His healthier feeling saw at a glance all the dangers, all the consequences—the future of this woman; the position she was constraining him to take; the interruption to his career, to his heart's vocation. But what availed it at that moment? What profited it that his love of honour and truth, that his whole nature, rose against the step? that he tried every means to hold her back? His reflection came too late! The countess could not release herself from the web she had spun; she could give up husband, child, the last moral safeguard, but not the ideal of the time, the glory of a *grande passion*.

The young man was not satisfied with his own representations. He sought to influence the countess by the authority and weight of others. First, he persuaded her mother, Madame de Flavigny, to oppose her views; then her former confessor, the famous *curé* of the Madeleine, Abbé du Guéry, who afterwards met with so tragic an end during the Commune; and lastly, a venerable old man, her family notary. But neither Guéry's grave and gentle exhortations, nor the fiery eloquence of Lamenais; neither her mother's tears, nor the notary's reproaches, could bring her to her senses. She

rejected with a laugh all the arguments of morality or reason : her delusion was incurable.

Many are of opinion that, after all these occurrences, Liszt might still have broken with the countess ; but he did not. He was too noble, and too proud to abandon a woman at a moment when she had a right to appeal to his heart ; he gave himself up to his fate. His immediate future was thus decided : an abiding drop of poison had fallen into his life, and also into his innermost being.

The Countess d'Agoult now undertook a journey with her mother ; their first destination was Basle. Madame de Flavigny hoped, by her presence, to prevent a definitively rash step, concluding that, after some time, her daughter would return to her normal position. But in this she was mistaken. One morning the countess's trunks were, without his previous knowledge, brought to Liszt's rooms ; for he had followed the ladies to Basle, but was living in another hotel.

Madame de Flavigny returned to Paris alone, where a violent storm now broke loose. The countess's connection with Liszt had already been known, but as long as it did not strike the eyes of the world, or break the laws of conventionality, there seemed to be no need to speak against it. But this open *éclat* was quite

different. It called forth the indignation of society, and although Liszt had not carried off the countess, any more than he ever did any other woman, the word "abduction" was hurled after him by those who knew nothing of the real state of the case. They outlawed their favourite, and implacable epithets followed the countess.

For her there was no return! Only one way was open to a moral conclusion—to turn Protestant and enter into a legitimate union with the artist: a way which did not suit *his* character, being only "a subterfuge," and which was impossible on her side, because it would have taken away the grand *éclat*. When, annoyed at the vexations of the position into which he had been thrust, he exclaimed, "Si nous étions Protestants," she interrupted him haughtily with "La Comtesse d'Agoult ne sera *jamais* Madame Liszt!"

He heard and was silent. Nevertheless, he undertook all the responsibilities of an honourable man towards his newly arrived wife. Nay, his pride went farther. He could not endure the thought of her giving up any of her previous habits of life. Her income consisted only of the interest of her dowry which the Count d'Agoult *had* paid her very regularly; but what was twenty thousand francs a year to

meet the requirements of her luxury, which, according to Liszt's secretary, Belloni, amounted in the course of years to three hundred thousand francs? Liszt covered all these expenses with the proceeds of his concerts. He also undertook responsibilities of a tenderer nature, which fell into the period of their intimate connection.

When they told him that all Paris was in an uproar at the "abduction," and that the whole blame fell upon him, he answered with his characteristic pride, "Good, then I will bear it." No word of self-defence, none that might have exposed the countess passed his lips.

But a better view of the case gradually found its way in the Parisian circles. His endeavours to withhold the countess from her romantic step were not altogether unknown; and when the passing years proved how magnanimously he took on himself all the consequences, his later proceedings were universally called "correct," and even the Count d'Agoult, as well as Count Flavigny—the countess's brother—said at last, when affairs were arranged in their presence, in a *conseil de famille*, "Liszt is a man of honour."

XVIII.

LISZT AS THE FIRST LITERARY CHAMPION OF MUSICAL REFORMS.

[Period of his travels with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-1840.]

Geneva. Blondine. Retirement from public life. Essays “De la situation des artistes.” Their position with regard to the history of the time and to R. Wagner’s “Kunst und Revolution.” Exterior occasion of his literary occupations. His challenge to art-criticism. Simultaneous musical and literary strivings in France and in Germany.

WHEN Madame de Flavigny returned to Paris, Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult also left Basle, and went to Geneva, where they remained till the end of the year 1836. A musical excursion of Liszt's to Paris in the spring of 1836, and mountain tours in company with the countess, were the only interruptions to his residence in Geneva.

Here they inhabited an elegant dwelling in the Rue Tabazan. Their windows looked out on the magnificent chain of the Jura, whose silent

and divinely lofty majesty spoke of other things than human passion. Before them lay Lake Leman—an image of eternally moving, changeful life.

Liszt's heart was like the panorama before his eyes. Lofty ideals within him, but before them lay a restless and often foaming sea.

He had taken all the consequences of his passion upon himself. But he was no quiet sufferer, neither were the feelings which burned within him extinguished. Too much excited, too much under the spell of the moment, too much entangled with the romantic ideas of demoniac love, he could not withdraw himself from the influences of his situation: he still stood in the midst of, and not above it. If the fair woman at one hour wound wild roses about his head, the next only the thorns were felt, which he pressed with self-irony into his own heart. The natures of both prevented their connection from being a happy one.

The state of his soul was mirrored in the writings of his favourite authors, Byron and Senancourt. The richly harmonious and yet wildly vibrating chords of the former awakened an echo in every vein of feeling, which found a lyrical response in the poetry of the Swiss poet, than whom no one has better rendered in words the music of world-sorrow.

Notwithstanding the contradictions into which the floods of Romanticism had drawn Liszt, great moments of ease of soul were not denied him, which ripened the youth to manhood, but bound him still closer to the countess. Many a piece of music, composed at the end of the year 1835, betrays such periods of repose: "Les Cloches de G——." The words added to this title give it the appearance of a picture and mood of nature: "Minuit dormait; le lac était tranquille; les cieux étoilés . . . nous voguions loin du bord." But another motto,

I live not in myself, but I become
A portion of that around me,¹

and the dedication, "à Blondine, . . ." show that it was not only the majesty of the surrounding nature that moved him, and made him feel himself a portion of the great All, but that there lay concealed beneath the surface of his existence deep and refined feelings harmonizing with the chime of bells, and the solemn mood of a glorious creation. Life had appeared to him in a new form in his "lockigen Blondchen"—Angiolin del biondo crin.

Though Liszt's romance of love brought moments which stood above passion, the connection remained an unblessed one from begin-

¹ "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Canto III. lxxii.

ning to end : the countess's misguided step and their removing in company to Geneva had brought things to a climax. The die was cast. Beyond the pale of social order, nothing during his stay at this city was settled as to the choice and pursuance of a determined plan of life. All appeared left to chance.

Five years of a wandering life through Switzerland and Italy followed the storms of Paris, with no other aim and no other end than to satisfy the love of travelling and the necessity of self-education. Although during this whole period he pursued art in silence more as a private man, he did not entirely withdraw from practising it publicly. His natural predilections urged him again and again to break through the bonds of retirement, especially when artistic or charitable objects were concerned, or when the question of existence required it.

Nevertheless these five years were not lost to him ; he ripened both as a man and as an artist, and his spirit gained in clearness and breadth. If, in particular, the three last years had called out Liszt's originality and sowed its broad and fertile soil with seeds of manifold kinds, the time that now followed was to afford the latter the repose necessary for inward development. This time begins with his residence in Geneva. Thence traces of greater maturity

appear. Nothing indeed was more fitted to clear the views and ideas which were planted in him than the life which he here led.

This retirement was in strong contrast with his Parisian habits. He indulged in intercourse with few but eminent men, partly of riper years, he lived for his art, for nature, and seldom came into contact with the Genevese public, and then but casually and superficially. No struggle of opinions surrounded him, no corrupting societies drew him into their whirlpools, the thousand-fold contradictions and provocations of the city of the Seine, with its romantic prophethood, lay behind him, and instead of its confused voices the mountain echoes floated upon his ears ; the overpowering might of nature and her moods penetrated his heart.

His life of thought could develop itself freely, without disturbance, without restraint, but also without violently sweeping currents, and so the requirements and measures of his nature replaced themselves. The retirement in which he here lived was for him the adjusting stillness of nature after the storms of spring. Though he was too young for the process of mental fermentation which was going on within him, to come to perfect clearness, yet a gradual separation took place of all that was foreign to his nature.

His views ripened, his consciousness became clearer, and though the political, social, and artistic questions of the time still echoed mightily within him, they were rendered clearer by his views in regard to the mission of art in the history of humanity and civilization, and the position and standing of artists. Liszt now lived apart from the French historical stage and the questions of the time, but he still sympathized with them, nor did he remain inactive.

Already in Paris the social position of the artist had warmly occupied, nay, deeply affected him. He had followed the wounded artistic feeling, with its sympathies and antipathies, that had been obliged to look on, when the economy of the new government had mined the ground under the artists' feet ; he had witnessed with alarm that universal current which sought the levelling of rank, and the consciousness worked within him that the artistic career in its highest sense is impossible, if the artist himself does not raise himself to the heights of universal instruction, if his intelligence remains undeveloped.

In the spring of that year Liszt had withdrawn from the eyes of the Parisians, and had fled for a short time to a dwelling in the outskirts of Paris. Here he had already begun to give himself up to his train of thought, and to

bring them to form pen in hand. He endeavoured in a series of essays to put his ideas before the public, and at the same time to lead the way to their solution. Great innovating thoughts moved the young man and guided his pen. He had already finished two of these articles when he left Paris ; now in Geneva he took up the work again, and a series of six splendid essays appeared at short intervals in the columns of the "Gazette musicale de Paris," of the year 1835, essays which bear clear traces of Liszt's incipient ripeness, and in each additional one show the work which the present repose was silently performing in his mind. It was in these writings that Liszt brought to the bar of public opinion the Vandalism exercised by the *régime* of Louis Philippe on musical art ; they bear the title, "De la Situation des Artistes."¹ While the first two bear the marks of youthful fancy with its glowing ideals of art, the last astonish us by their practical acuteness, which recognizes clearly and surely the way which the artist has to tread in order to fulfil his work of civilization.

With these essays Liszt entered the forum of time, armed as a voluntary champion of art and the artist. All its questions gleamed in

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii. "Ueber die Stellung der Künstler."

the background, and cast tongues of fire into the light under which he placed the musical art of that time, the institutions of France which represented it, and finally, the artist himself, and showed the canker which was gnawing into both art and artist.

Like another St. Michael, he brandished the sword against all that seemed to stand in the way of musical progress ; he lowered it humbly where the great and the wonderful awakened his admiration. His glance was clear, his vision open, his personal speech moderate, but through it a hero spoke.

With indescribable boldness he held the torch of truth above musical circumstances. First, he spoke of the different tasks of musical artists whom, continuing and completing Jean Jacques Rousseau, he divided into three classes : performing, creating, and instructing virtuosos. Rousseau's division consisted of but the two first classes ; Liszt added the latter. Referring to the period of classical antiquity, he pointed out that the social position of the artist was of great importance for the state and civilization, and showed how universal and beneficial the influence of "music" was on general life. And when he had enthusiastically sketched a picture of art in those times, and of the great mission it was admitted by the nation to fulfil, and had

spoken of the effect it exercised on political, social, and philosophical life, he measured the *now* by the *then*, the present position of art and artists in regard to the state and to civilization, by what it was in days of yore. Fearlessly he held up to the world, and especially to Louis Philippe, the sins against art and artists, and scourged those amongst the latter, too, who, forgetful of their dignity, were guilty of treason against art, and converted her into a milch cow. Neither did he forget that parasitic class who, without inner calling, only following external aims, employ art as a means to ascend. To them he added the critics without musical vocation, who, neither musicians nor *savants*, a disgrace to art, exercise their musical judgment in the daily press, and lead astray and confuse the public by their pitiful criticism.

He did not, however, try to seek the cause of the decline of art and of the artistic career in public and social life and its requirements alone, but—and this is significative of the way in which he was penetrated with the ideal of art and the artistic calling—quite as much in the want of cultivation, of artistic conviction, and faith in the ideals and the might of art on the side of the artist himself.

After having struck his fiery probe into state, art, and artists, in all directions, he turned to the

different musical institutions of France, subjecting them also to examination, in order to suggest the reforms which they required. And he did not rest here. He not only criticized, he also showed the means and ways by which these reforms might be, and were to be carried out. With a remarkable keenness and sound, practical glance rare at his age, this youth of scarcely three and twenty years tested the performances of the Conservatoire, of the Lyrical Theatre, of the Concert Institute, of instruction, of criticism, and, finally, of church music, and measured their advantages and their defects in accordance with the task which they had to perform towards the present time and its requirements.

This criticism was followed by plans for a thorough reform, which are in full force at the present day, and will be for all time. Finally, an appeal to artists and the friends of art for the foundation of a universal musical union gave these articles the stamp of a reformatory act. This musical union was to "call forth, encourage, and put into practice the upward-striving movement and unlimited development of music, and raise and ennable the position of artists, by the use of all the means lying within the compass of their dignity, for the removal of the abuses and injustices to which they were exposed."

"In the name of all artists, of art, and of social progress," wrote Liszt, "we require—

(a) *The foundation of an assembly to be held every five years for religious, dramatic, and symphonetic music, by which the works that are considered best, in these three categories, shall be executed in the most solemn manner daily for a whole month in the Louvre, being afterwards obtained by the government, and published at their expense.* In other words, we require the foundation of a *musical museum*.

(b) *The introduction of musical instruction into the people's schools, its extension in other schools, and on this occasion the calling into existence of a new church music.*

(c) *The restoration of the royal band of musicians and the improvement of choral singing in ALL the churches both of Paris and of the provinces.*

(d) *General assemblies of the philharmonic societies in the manner of the great musical festivals of England and Germany.*

(e) *A Lyrical Theatre, concert and chamber music performances, organized after the plan sketched in the chapter treating of the Conservatoire.*

(f) *A school of musical progress to be founded outside the Conservatoire by the most eminent artists—a school the branches of which shall extend to all the provincial metropolises.*

(g) *A chair of musical history and philosophy.*

(h) *A cheap edition of the most important works of old and new composers from the epoch of musical Renaissance up to our time. This publication, as a whole, should comprise the development and historical succession, from the ballad to Beethoven's choral symphonies, and might bear the title, 'Pantheon of Music.'*

The biographies, treatises, commentaries, and glossaries would form a true "*Encyclopædia of Music.*"

This was the programme which young Liszt sketched and delivered to his time for the promotion of art. And, in fact, by it he has become the pioneer of all those progressive

movements and reforms which, during the last forty years, have, at least, taken a certain form in the European musical world. Though this programme has not been carried out in every point, and the time still owes an answer to the call for the foundation of a school comprising and representing the progressive efforts of musical art, and though the request for a reform in church music has remained unheard ; yet, to this very day, every single paragraph is of importance, and contains all the aims of the artistically social endeavours of all periods in the direction of progress.

It is interesting that the “Universal German Musical Union” called into life by the Leipsic assembly of musical artists (1859)¹ should have accepted the basis thus sketched out, perhaps without any knowledge as to the former project of their president,² and, though not to the extent which he meditated at that time, have made it their own.

These essays of Liszt’s created a great deal of dust. Scarcely had the first appeared when the shafts hurled at art-parasites raised against him a whole army of critics, theatrical speculators, and a certain class of teachers then *à la mode* in the *salons*. Then came a shower of

¹ Proposed by Louis Köhler.

² Liszt was president of this important union.

mockery and journalistic criticism of all kinds. They called his representations, "exaggerations," "affected phraseology," "insane expressions," and more of the like; and, alluding to his connection with the Countess d'Agoult, they represented to him "that he who held so favourable a position in society had no right to complain of the position of artists."

"For the very reason," answered Liszt, calmly, "that my position is so fortunate an one, it is my duty to intercede for my less fortunate brothers in art."

The attacks to which he was exposed swelled to such a mass that he was obliged to defend himself; and so the whole of the fourth article is a defence, but also—through the facts which he brings forward in confirmation of the conditions and circumstances described by him—a biting philippic against his opponents, and at the same time a deeply mournful picture of the sufferings and lives of artists. The description of the latter will always render this essay valuable as an addition to the history of art at that time.

While, however, his opponents raged against him, a small number of his brothers in artistic faith greeted the essays with joy; among these, before all, were Hector Berlioz, Friedrich Chopin, Christian Urhan, and many of the most

eminent musical artists in Paris, as well as the poets and *literati* who represented progress. To them his appeal to the dignity of artists was written from the soul.

Unfortunately, the actual aim of all these essays was unreached. The musician's voice could not be distinguished among the many which were raised from all classes, appealing, demonstrating, and discussing. The plans of reform contained in them, and their bearing, were, on the whole, neither understood nor regarded. Even the demonstrations of his opponents could not affect them. Liszt had outstripped his time.

If we reflect on the later movements of art in the department of music, we find these essays of Liszt, in a certain degree, both forerunners and pendant to Richard Wagner's "Kunst und Revolution," which appeared in 1849. Kindred strings are touched, and the relationship of the two pieces is not to be mistaken. Both are cries of need from the deeply moved soul of art, both are children of the Revolution. Wagner's writing, "Art and Revolution," came forth from the cauldron of the February revolution, the onward excitement of which became the flame which stirred Wagner's feelings and thoughts to rise against the Existing. In Liszt's essays, written fourteen years earlier, the July

revolution was still boiling. They sent forth a cry of help to the artists, to the nations, against the Vandalic spirit of the French government.

Both artists, Liszt as well as Richard Wagner, begin by referring to the civilized people of antiquity, to the Greece of former days, to old classical times.

It is true that the motto of Wagner's pamphlet—"Formerly, when art was silent, state wisdom and philosophy began; now, where the statesman and the philosopher come to an end, the artist begins again"—betrays beforehand other aims than those which Liszt pursued, yet they complete each other.

Liszt compared the ideas which were attached to the notion of music among the ancients to those which prevail in modern times, and measured the present position of art and artists in regard to the state by the lofty ideal of former times, while Wagner, as it were, drew a horoscope of the music of the future from the art and history of Greece, or rather sought to point out its path.

It is significative of the standing-point of both that, while Wagner beheld the solution of his questions in turning to the ideas of art in Greece, Liszt sees the true salvation of art only in a *great religious and philosophical synthesis*.

Wagner, in his pamphlet, begins from himself. The opera composer and *Kapellmeister*, restrained in his intentions, is recognizable in every sentence. His thoughts fly out from the internal uproar as if through rocks violently burst asunder. Liszt's essays, on the contrary, are free from all egotistic strivings. The outflowing of a pure flame of love, they fight for the cause of his fellow artists, and of musical art in general, not for one particular branch of music, and least of all for the one represented by himself. His thoughts, wholly penetrated with the fervour of his love to art, remain in the flow of this fire, and a pensiveness that never loses sight of the *present* and of the *possible*, stands above and guides them. These different personal points of departure lead by separate ways, as it were, to the contents of their thoughts. Whilst "Revolution und Kunst," suggests reforms in the theory of art, seeking for help in their fulfilment from sword and ruin, the essays, "De la Situation des Artistes," strive for a new blossoming of art in a peaceful way, through a state of order, an improved pecuniary position, an education befitting the dignity of art, and an increased social standing, and such-like practical reforms of all artistic institutions. Liszt struggled for the whole practical ground on

which theoretic reforms are carried out, according to nature that is organically—humanity, cultivation, reasonable freedom, and the ranking of art among the interests of civilization of the state.

With these essays begins Liszt's higher activity as an author. He had, indeed, already several times taken up the pen before he began this larger work, but these labours were mostly casual, and belonged to the events of the day, behind which there was no important thought. They nevertheless gave the first impulse to his literary activity. They were undertaken on the occasion of the founding of the "*Gazette musicale de Paris*," in which Liszt took a great share, and which he partly edited, though anonymously. A pistol duel was another cause of his taking pen in hand. It was then the epoch of the literary, or, if one might so say, "ideal duel," the principle of which was represented by the journalist, Armand Carrel. Liszt was implicated as second in one of these "affairs of honour." The musical publisher and editor of the "*Gazette Musicale*," Maurice Schlesinger, had allowed himself to find some of the admired children of Henri Herz's muse somewhat less charming than one of his adorers had done. The consequence was a pistol duel, in which young Liszt appeared as Schlesinger's second, and hereupon sent a

report to the “Gazette Musicale,” but without signing his name. This was Liszt’s maiden speech as an author. Schlesinger was so charmed with it, and discovered so much originality in Liszt’s style of writing, that he afterwards frequently applied to him. This was in the spring of 1834. The thing itself was only an affair of the day.

With the present work it was different. It treated of a subject of great importance and incalculable interest for music. Although, to estimate things rightly, the author’s glance was still too much veiled by youthful enthusiasm, and his descriptions had too much taken their colouring from feeling, it was, nevertheless, a thoughtful, sharply delineated, important work, which formed an organic whole, and presupposed a great deal of study. It placed him as a writer on the list of those names which, in a similar manner, established the intellectual worth of the “Gazette musicale de Paris”—especially during its first decade. These were names which still shine on its title-page, such as Adam, Berlioz, Halévy, Panofka, Marx, R. Wagner; and then Balzac, Dumas, Heine, Sand, &c.

It is worthy of remark, as a fact in the history of music, that at that stirring time the musicians themselves began to undertake criticism in the musical department, which till then had lain in

the hands of *literati*, poets, politicians, with or without musical knowledge. Here also Liszt—on one hand through his attacks on false musical literature, on the other through the setting up of new and guiding thoughts—was decidedly one of the first and most important forerunners. In reference to this he wrote at that time to George Sand, “I have the firm conviction that a kind of philosophical criticism of works of art must arise, which no one will better understand how to exercise than the artist himself.” This thought was so little current in those days that he added, “However odd this idea of mine may seem to you in the first moment, don’t laugh at it.”

What he positively required was that criticism should become more and more the affair of the productive artists; and all the fruitful seeds that he afterwards strewed into musical life in reference to this requirement were already within him. What he afterwards says is only a consequence of these ideas—

The unartistic can only speak from their own individual unguaranteed impressions, because they do not possess the necessary foundation for their opinions.

Let us ask: To whom but to artists does criticism belong? Whose business is it to decide in affairs of art, if not his who exercises it? And who better than the producer himself can judge the productions of the feeling and creative spirit? To clear the domain of art entirely of weeds, to lay aside the tares, to root out the poisonous plants, for this the *savants* are not

enough, nor politicians and poets, nor well-disposed partisans—it is our own affair to cleanse our own house, to drive out buyers and sellers, money-changers and usurers, from the temple.

Those were views which already at that time stood firm in Liszt. With such he had stirred up Schlesinger to found the “*Gazette musicale de Paris*” (1834), and thus to place a journal at the disposal of artists by which they could take into their own hands and lead the discussion of theoretical questions and artistic matters. Liszt’s essays, “On the Position of Artists,” were the fullest expression which had appeared, not only in France but in Germany, of these requirements of the spirit of progress. It was a chance, but still a significant one, that in this same year, 1834, Robert Schumann in Leipsic also called into being the “*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*” proceeding from the same views. The two musical journals, the French and the German, have not kept time with each other, it is true; the German through all these years has remained a standard-bearer of progressive art and artistic interests, which cannot be affirmed of our neighbours on the other side of the Rhine; yet it was kindred efforts which founded them both. Here as there, and there as here, the word of progress was spoken by the mouth of artists, and here as there it was the musical pioneers of our century, the geniuses on whose

shoulders its progress lay, whose thoughts fell kindling into musical literature.

Now a change was prepared in the handling and direction of criticism. In Germany Schumann's deep and poetically excitable nature, with the enchanter's wand of artistic fancy, raised criticism to a science, and appointed it a place beside her, and now a new morning dawned in the sky of thoughtful art; and in France, after Liszt's example, it was his friend Hector Berlioz whose dissecting knife laid bare the corrupt and cankered state of music, and thereby purified it. Liszt, as the third—or even the first—in this league of intelligence did not work by sarcasm, nor poetic fervour of mind, like Schumann. Though a light and graceful thread of irony ran through his literary manifestations—for without irony there is no genuine intelligence! yet his nature, on fire for truth and beauty, ever stood in the foreground, and wove the ideals of art, penetrated by the religious ether that consecrates her mission and maintains her in the highest spheres of spiritual life.

With these three names are linked, during the period 1830—1848, that general literary participation on the part of musical artists in their own interest. The constructive thought of Richard Wagner's "*Kunstwerk der Zukunft, Oper und Drama*," &c., which was to form the

culminating point of literary activity on the part of the musical artists of our century, falls into the period after the year 1848.

Liszt afterwards repeatedly appeared before the public as an author. Several smaller essays—on “People’s Editions of Important Works,” “Meyerbeer’s Huguenots,” a criticism of “Thalberg’s Compositions,” his paper war with Féétis in regard to Thalberg—fall into the years from 1835 to 1837.¹

At the same time (1835) begin his travelling letters under the title “*Lettres d’un Bachelier-ès-Musique*,”² twelve in number, which he sent to Schlesinger for the “*Gazette Musicale*” during the period of his travels with the Countess d’Agoult.

To these letters, as an important material for the characterization and the description of his life at that period, we shall often refer. They are also a valuable contribution to musical history concerning artistic events and contemporaries. They were written from Geneva, Paris, Rohant, Bellagio, Venice, and other cities, and addressed to George Sand, Adolphe Pictet, Heinrich Heine, Louis de Ronchaud, H. Berlioz, and others. They accompany the course of his journeys, and present in

¹ “*Gesammelte Schriften Liszt’s*,” vol. ii.

² *Ibid.* vol. ii. “*Reise Briefe eines Baccalaureus der Tonkunst*.”

the unconstrained form of letters, and with a rich undercurrent of travelling adventures, impressions, views of life, conversations with different contemporaries, as well as general artistic and musical subjects. Elegant and graceful in expression, full of genial flashing thoughts and flowers of metaphor, always keen and striking in the *aperçus*, they give a picture of his inner being as a youth, a picture of rich poetic bloom and warm ideal desire, full of dreams and yet with eyes awake, surrounded with much splendour, but ennobled by a deep feeling for truth and genuine beauty.

The world-sorrow, the shadow of which still glides here and there over his "Letters," vanishes at last, and that universal trait which had become a mania among the Romanticists, of making one's own Ego the subject of observation, and citing it before the public, retires more and more into the background, like a vapoury haze before a current of healthy air. In a letter to Heinrich Heine (1838) he decisively rejects this mania.

To speak frankly (he wrote, after the already-mentioned indiscreet remarks which Heine had made in reference to him), I regard the publishing one's thoughts and feelings by the press as one of the evils of our time. There prevails the great mistake among artists that one should judge the other, not only in his works, but also in his personality. In dissecting each other before the public, we often act with great brutality, but

for the most part unjustly in a part of our existence which, at least, during our lifetime, with all desire for questioning, should be spared us ! This manner of holding discourses anatomical and psychological, for the benefit of public curiosity, has, from the vanity of individuals, become a custom. No one has any longer a right to complain, for nobody spares anybody : and besides, it cannot be denied, that the most of us are not averse to publicity, whether it be praise or blame—they see their names in circulation, at least, for a day or two. To these, I must declare, I do not belong.

Ever clearer and purer appeared in these letters an ideal, moral earnestness, great general views, a deep-feeling and yet an objective spirit, which sees things as they are, and knows how to unite them with the great whole of life, without losing the glow for the lofty ideals of humanity, and belief in them.

The first of these letters falls in the year 1835 at the beginning of that period of Liszt's life with which this chapter commences. It is addressed from Geneva to his friend George Sand—"an seinen Freund"—for it was only known in the narrower circle of *literati* and artists, that the male name of George Sand concealed a female pen. This letter gives an enchanting description of his life in the Swiss town, which just at that time was an asylum for many a fallen great one, and many a political fugitive. It also throws interesting rays of light on Liszt's general culture, on the keenness and *finesse* of his psychological glance, as well as the grace and

modesty of his nature, and the artistically religious views to which his religious sentiments continually urge him—a sharply coloured sketch that, better than any account from another pen, describes a part of his Genevese period. A translation of this letter follows in the next chapter, which is dedicated to his residence in this canton.

XIX.

PERIOD OF HIS TRAVELS WITH THE COUNTESS D'AGOULT, 1835-1840.

[In Geneva, 1835—December, 1836.]

Letter to George Sand. The Calvinistic Reformation Festival. Concert for the festival in St. Peter's Church. Concert of Prince Belgiojoso, Liszt, and Lafont for Italian fugitives. Liszt's public position. Personal connections. Mountain tour to Chamounix. Subjects of conversation. Freibourg cathedral. He leaves Geneva.

Geneva, Nov. 23, 1835.

As I, a musician, have no claim to a place in the columns of the “*Revue des deux Mondes*,” I make use of those of the “*Gazette Musicale*,” which unhappily I must weary with my poor prose in order to recall myself to your recollection, dear George.

On my return hither, after a long excursion in the mountains, I found your brotherly epistle,¹ for which I herewith thank you a thousand times, although it seems to retract your promise of soon being with us. And yet, how willingly would I entice you hither, strangest and most fantastical of all travellers—hither, to this side of the cloud-girted Jura, which in the fading twilight seems to rise like a gloomy spectre between me and my dearest friends. . . . Yet, what shall I say to spur on your curiosity to victory over your laziness?

¹ A letter addressed to him by George Sand, “*Sur Lavater et une Maison deserte*,” in the “*Revue des deux Mondes*,” had preceded this letter of Liszt. (“*Lettres d'un Voyageur*,” No. vii.)

It has not been permitted me, in my Alpine wanderings, to penetrate to the snow-covered treasures. The wallwort, anemone, harts-tongue, with which you are so fond of conversing, because they whisper delicious secrets to your ear which they conceal from us, do not venture to cling to the smooth walls of my white house.

The musical republic which your soaring, lively fancy has created, has been for me, thank God, until now, a subject of *wishes* and *hopes*, threatened with the mild laws of intimidation, and not yet with exile and imprisonment. To return to myself, I must blush for shame and confusion at the earthly dust, which my feet raise in the prosaic road where I wander, when I think of your proud anticipations, your beautiful dreams of the social working of the art to which my existence is devoted, and contrast them with the gloomy discouragement that often takes possession of me at sight of the reality ; when I compare these fruitless efforts with the hot desire ; the *nothingness of the production* with the *infinity of the thought* ; the wonders which, in old times, the threefold holy lyre brought forth, sympathetic and refreshing to the senses, with the low sterile position to which they seem to wish to confine it at the present day.

But since you belong to those who, in spite of the coy present, never doubt in the future, since, moreover, you require from me to communicate to you my unimportant observations on my travels, and since the peculiarity of the "Revues" which have, till now, served me as a medium, excludes every political and metaphysical digression with which we have so gloriously amused ourselves at the chimney fire of your rooms filled with fame and Turkish tobacco-smoke—so, till I can relate to you about Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* and the Sixtine chapel,¹ I will make you acquainted with the few interesting occurrences connected with the musical chronicle of Geneva, the Protestant Rome.

It so happened that I arrived just on the eve of the centennial celebration of the Calvinistic Reformation festival, which lasts three whole days. The first is devoted to the young people by the paternal authority of the Canton. How my heart leaped when I saw them swarming about the garden like a cloud of

¹ Referring to a projected journey into Italy.

locusts. They laughed, ran, jumped, turned somersaults, and did their utmost to criticise the Catholics' fasts practically by devouring a quantity of little cheeses (*vacherins*) and tarts.

The second—in a peculiar sense—religious holyday is solemnized in St. Peter's Church (the cathedral). This temple, consecrated to the prince of the apostles, was the metropolitan church till August, 1535, when the preacher Farel first announced the Reformation. Here again we see one of those remarkable developments which so often meet us in history, the drama of humanity, whose inner unity only God knows, and which will be revealed to us only when the last man has spoken the last word thereupon ; the temple consecrated to the founder of popedom, the great preacher of humanity, now serves for the assemblies and festivals of those who have torn away the greatest part of their possession from his successors, and have shaken the vast building of Catholicism, of which Peter was the cornerstone (auquel Pierre servait de première pierre), to the very foundations. “Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram ædificato ecclesiam meam.”

At the time that Geneva was still orthodox, the cathedral contained twenty-four altars ; numerous pictures, statues, and bas-reliefs adorned the walls. The stalls, in which comfortable prebendaries enjoyed a pious repose, were ornamented with figures of apostles and prophets. Among the latter was also Erythrea, the Roman sybil, in whose immortalization, artistic caprice, doubtlessly weary of so many solemn and venerable faces, thought itself justified in embodying a legend, according to which that prophetess had announced to the Roman Emperor the coming of the Messiah at the same instant in which he was born in the manger at Bethlehem.

The walls are now deprived of their ornaments ; the carvings and bas-reliefs are mutilated by the hand of the Reformers ; the antique Gothic façade has given place to a modern gable front, a miserable imitation of the Pantheon, an abortive memorial of the dying power of faith of the eighteenth century ! My blood ran cold as I stepped into this plundered church, whither the remembrance of Calvin's work, and also the fragment of one of Handel's oratorios, had led me.

The places for the singers, male and female, were erected in

that part of the choir which was formerly enclosed by a gilded grating—in that consecrated place which it was formerly denied to any one to tread who was not immediately concerned in the celebration of the Divine mysteries—the place where formerly the priest, before the flower-adorned altar, swung aloft the clouds of incense, to call down the redeeming God. It is certain that the Lord descends the most willingly to the altar, of a pure heart of a chaste and pious soul, as he himself testifies, it is true that the rarest and costliest incense is nothing in his eyes compared to the light of an innocent, honest face, to the soft loveliness of an innocent-breathing prayer ; but whoever has been present at a Reformation Jubilee will be obliged to confess that these ladies and gentlemen of the Protestant Sacred Musical Society, the greatest part of whom protested with such fanatic zeal against the laws of time and composition, could only offer a scanty compensation for the grandeur, the solemnity, the infinite, mysterious depth of the Catholic sacrifice !

Of voices and instruments, who would not feel inclined to judge from the vacillating harmony of the still more doubtful discords of the mind and will ? What strange inconsistency caused the Reformers to banish statuary and painting from their churches, while they retained music and eloquence, “ the first of all fine arts ? ” Blind and prejudiced ! how could they forget that the beautiful is only the reflection of the true, that art is only the refraction of thought ? A religion so very volatile that it seems to stand outside of all external appearances—is not that finding fault with the works of God, the great and exalted Master who, in the creation of the world and of man, has at the same time revealed Himself as the eternal, infinite, and almighty Poet, Architect, Musician, and Sculptor ? How can they mistake this truth ?

I will not enlarge farther on the subject of these, otherwise, praiseworthy attempts of the “ Société de Chant sacré.” I also avoid a lengthened description ¹ of the festivities and illumina-

¹ *Note by Liszt.* However mediocre the result of this jubilee concert might have been, this society does good service to art by executing the sacred works of great masters. It were even to be wished that similar societies should be formed in France,

tions of the third holiday, and pass to a secular, indeed, but therefore more amusing musical *réunion*, the concert given in favour of the poor, and the Italian fugitives, by Prince Bel-giojoso and Franz Liszt.

How you would have laughed, if you had seen the monstrously large bright yellow bill,¹ on which our names appeared in big letters, and which, for several days, attracted large groups of gapers, eager to learn with what right and under what pretence one dared to demand five francs, while, from time immemorial, for three francs, and even less, they had procured themselves the whole dose of harmony which they required to pass an evening agreeably, and moreover, without fear of nightmare or bad dreams.

Whether from curiosity or beneficence—“*Quelque diable aussi les poussant*,” our concert had a large attendance, which offered, in the highest degree, to the attentive observer, the charm of the social picturesque.

Although the Canton Geneva is scarcely to be seen on the map, and is quite lost and buried in the shadow of two chains of mountains, its territory swarms with a multitude of fallen potentates, dethroned kings, extinguished powers. Every day increases the number of these illustrious personages—these kings, ministers, generals, who, chased by the storm of revolution, wander from land to land, and in a certain respect form a homeless people, a people with a mark upon their brow, like that of

if it were only to drive from our churches that herd of common criers usually termed singers.

¹ *Note by Liszt.* To give you an idea of the cleverness with which the artists who wished to be seen and heard in Geneva, excited the curiosity of the public, I send you a literal copy of an announcement which, on my arrival here, I read at the end of a programme affixed to the walls, and which made me doubt if ever I could rival such an elegant arrangement, and such poetry of style: “Notice. It may be that the public have often been culpably deceived, and are on their guard against presumptuous announcements. What is now to be heard and seen, however, exceeds the promises of the artist, and the expectations of amateurs.”

the Jews, like them struck with a mysterious curse, because they too have rejected the word of God : Freedom.

In the concert-hall were seen, the ex-king of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte, and his charming daughter, with fair hair and soft, sad glance, like a dove amongst ruins ; a minister of Charles the X., who supports the punishment inflicted on him without discouragement or bitterness, a punishment always hard, and at the present time ignominious ; a woman who has done honour to her name, and has been seen on the battle-fields of La Vendée—and a hundred others that I have forgotten, or, from want of time, cannot count up ; and finally, Bourmont's companion at Waterloo, who, stained by victory, is now purified by misfortune, and as an exile devotes his leisure hours to a work of art which he pursues with unwearied zeal. General C—, a passionate lover of music, especially of Handel's, which he sings with rapturous warmth, has undertaken the publication of a collection of classical airs, to place before what he calls the decline of music a type of classic purity, and to raise the lofty formality, the spotless majesty of the names of Handel and Palestrina, as a sacred barrier against Italian ornament and the cold overcharging of the French. Thus, in art, as in politics, he devotes himself to the nurture of a past which he admires with a too great partiality, without deigning to notice the present ; so he does a turn to the latter just by this very perversity. As soon as I know exactly in what quarter of the globe my famed friend George is tarrying, he will receive the five or six numbers which have already appeared of the interesting publication.

But let us return to the particulars of our concert.

Behind a railing, hung with white, and adorned with wreaths of flowers, resembling an altar on the day of the first communion, were seen, on a terrace-like platform, a host of violins, hautboys, bassoons, and counterbasses, which executed the favourite overture to "La Dame Blanche," while a monstrous crystal candelabra, as if in cadence, let fall at measured intervals great drops of oil on the white and pink hats of the elegant Genevese ladies. Hereupon Prince Belgiojoso, so highly esteemed and spoiled in the Parisian salons, sang with perfect taste some things by Bellini, the enchanting serenade by Schubert, and an Italian

Romance, L'Addio, which he had written and composed in honour of the charming Countess M.¹ His pure, soft, vibrating voice, his free and simple school, awakened attention. A three-fold storm of applause greeted him when he left the piano. And now in all Geneva they only speak of the high-born artist, who has expressed liberal ideas in liberal works, and who, without disclaiming the crown inherited from his ancestors, finds his glory in subordinating it to that plebeian diadem which is accorded to nobility of mind and of talent.

Our old comrade and pupil, young Hermann,² from Hamburg, whom you have immortalized under the name of "Puzzi," accompanied him. His pale, melancholy face, his beautiful dark locks and languid figure, formed a poetic contrast to the firm bearing, the fair hair, and open, fresh-coloured countenance of the prince. The dear child again gave proof of that precocious understanding, that deep feeling for art, which already distinguishes him from common artists, and which induces me to promise him a splendid and fruitful future. In a piece arranged for four pianos, which Messrs. Wolf,³ Bonoldi, and I, executed, he was loudly clapped, and I should not wonder if more than one pretty young lady has made him the object of her glowing childish affection. And I am not sure that many a copy-book of grammar or ancient history does not bear on its classic leaves, romantically intertwined and surrounded with a symbolic forget-me-not, the name of Hermann and that of some precocious Julia, or fourteen-years-old Delphine.

Monsieur Lafont had the goodness to devote the whole fulness of his talent to the *Soirée*, which rendered it, of course, more rich and fruitful. Thirty years of brilliant success and esteemed celebrity dispenses me from any farther remark on this universally and justly admired artist.

As to your friend Franz, dear George, he will not weary you

¹ Miramont (?)

² Young Hermann was a favourite pupil of Liszt: and in reference to this George Sand called the two, "Raphael and Tebaldeo." Tebaldeo, an Israelite, was afterwards christened Hermann, and joined the Romish clergy.

³ Peter Wolf, his former scholar.

with the description either of his successes or of his defeats, and as you have much better to do than to listen to me, I now, finish my Geneva report with the reservation that I will take it up again as occasion offers.

I should like to persuade your far-famed indolence to exchange its Parisian *fauteuil* for a Swiss *bergère* by relating to you in detail of the contemporary magnates, as for instance, M. de Sismondi, M. de Candolle, &c., that Geneva is so proud of possessing within her walls, as also of several excellent friends who frequently assemble in the Rue Tabazan ; among others, M. Fazy, the Atlas who bears Central Europe on his shoulders ; then Mr. Alphonse Denis, who is a Geologist, Archæologist, Orientalist, Metaphysician, Artist, and, what is more than all, an infinitely amiable and intellectual man ; but I have a dreadful fear, above everything, of whatever might appear indiscreet.

Come to us, then, and that as soon as possible ! "Puzzi" has already bought a pipe of peace in your honour. Your garret is prepared and ready for your reception, and my piano with the mother-of-pearl keys, that has remained untouched for three months, is waiting for you, to fill the surrounding mountains with its confused echo.

Farewell, till we meet again,
FRANZ LISZT.

Liszt wrote this letter at the beginning of his stay in Geneva. The sketches planned for his "friend George," of his relations with public life during his stay in this town, were not worked out ; they remained unfinished.

Liszt was here especially occupied as a teacher, and the principal part of his activity as such was in connection with the Conservatoire of Music, opened at the beginning of the year 1836, under the direction of M. Bloc. He had exhibited the warmest interest in the foundation

of this institution, and when it came into being he gained particular merit by not only undertaking voluntarily a course of instruction on the piano, but also by relinquishing his fees in favour of the new academy. He gave it, indeed, a lustre such as it has scarcely ever possessed at any other period of its existence.

Liszt appeared in public in Geneva as a virtuoso only on particular occasions, as, for instance, for the benefit of the political Italian fugitives, on the 3rd October, 1835. It was this concert to which he alludes in his letter to George Sand, given in company with Prince Belgiojoso and Lafont.

The press acknowledged enthusiastically his genius and his performances; a little circumstance, however, occurred which is very characteristic of the artist. He had played a Concerto by Weber, the divisions of which, and the characteristic designations prefixed to the composition, "Adagio doloroso," and "Presto appassionato," he had cited in the programme. This was new to the concert reporter of the "Fédéral." He took these designations to be arbitrary on the part of the virtuoso, and reproved him with the flattering yet keen words, "Son jeu et son expression n'ont pas besoin des affiches." He called this remark, indeed, only "une petite chicane," to

excuse which he added the words, "parceque nous avons une souveraine horreur de ces petits moyens, qui nous paraissent ôter au talent un peu de sa dignité."¹

Liszt, however, took this reproach seriously, and saw in it "une accusation tacite de charlatanisme," for him the deepest dishonour which could happen to an artist. He therefore sent Weber's composition to the editor, in proof of the justness of his prefix, and accompanied it with these remarkable words—

Entré fort jeune dans la carrière artistique, j'ai été fréquemment éprouvé pendant ces douze dernières années, qui font un peu plus que la moitié de ma vie, par les admonestations et les censures d'un grand nombres d'Aristarques. La critique, ainsi que l'opinion, est reine du monde, et je ne prétends nullement protester contre sa souveraineté de fait et de droit. Sauf quelques cas très rares, il n'est pas convenable que l'artiste en appelle de ces decisions autrement que par un travail assidu et des progrès manifestes. Toutefois, lorsque par mégarde elle vient porter atteinte à ce qui constitue notre moralité intime, c'est assurément un devoir que de rectifier en toute simplicité les assertions erronées qui auraient pu lui échapper.²

¹ "Le Fédéral" (Genevese journal), 1835, No. 30.

² I entered the artistic career when still very young, and, during these last twelve years, which make a little more than the half of my life, I have experienced the admonitions and censures of a great number of Aristarchuses. Criticism, as well as opinion, is queen of the world, and I pretend in no wise to protest against her sovereignty, actual and virtual. Except in some very rare cases, it is not proper for an artist to appeal from these decisions otherwise than by assiduous labours and manifest progress. However, when, by mistake, she comes to attack what constitutes our individual morality, it is surely a duty to

The reports of the press—"Le Fédéral" and "L'Europe Centrale" at their head, were splendid and excellent each time Liszt appeared before the Genevese public, appreciating more and more on every occasion the nature and charm of his execution. "L'Europe Centrale" writes thus after a concert in April, 1836—

Liszt n'est pas une création ordinaire dans le monde des artistes, quand il joue, sa personne attire autant l'attention que son clavier, parceque toute la magie d'exécution dont il nous charme, vient réellement de l'inspiration.

Trouvez un autre mobile que l'inspiration à cet ouragan de notes, qui se précipitent, se pressent, je dirais presque se heurtent (si jamais aucune gênait l'autre) et qui vous transportent malgré vous. Otez à Liszt l'inspiration, et dites à ses doigts : Reproduisez-nous ces sons, ces rapports, qui viennent de nous enlever ; où voulez-vous que ses doigts trouvent l'agilité nécessaire ! C'est l'âme qui les fait courir comme la pensée ; le corps n'est pas capable, quelque rompu qu'il soit, de répéter mécaniquement un tel exercice ; cela ne s'apprend pas, c'est un don du ciel ! Liszt est un de ces artistes prédestinés à nous laisser entrevoir de certains rapports entre la vie universelle et notre existence individuelle. Il élève la musique à la destination rêvée par ceux qui ont cru que la beatitude éternelle consistait à entendre toujours de la musique.¹

rectify, in all simplicity, the erroneous assertions which might have escaped her.

¹ Liszt is not an ordinary creation in the world of artists ; when he plays, his person attracts us as much as his instrument, because all the magic of execution with which he charms us really comes from inspiration.

Find, if you can, another spring than that of inspiration for that hurricane of notes which rush, press, I had almost said knock against each other (if indeed any one impeded the other), and which hurry you away in spite of yourself. Take away

Besides such striking remarks, with which the Genevese criticisms are filled, poets were not wanting who sang "Liszt at the piano," representing to us, even now, the appearance of the artist whose tones, like those of a powerful magician, touch the thoughts and feelings of his hearers so penetratingly and so indescribably. The Feuilleton of the "Fédéral" sings the artist at the piano as follows—

LISZT AU PIANO.

Il s'assied ; regardez ! sur son front pâlissant
 Le précoce génie a gravé son empreinte ;
 Il allume le feu de ce regard puissant
 Où l'âme de l'artiste est peinte.
 Son sourire à la fois mélancolique et doux,
 D'un charme inexprimable embellit son visage,
 Comme luit un rayon en ciel plein d'orage . . .
 Il prélude ; écoutez ! amis, recueillez-vous.
 Sous ses doigts inspirés, la touche obéissante,
 S'anime et fait entendre une langue éloquente,
 Langue passionnée et qui va droit au cœur,
 Car elle en a jailli. De l'improvisateur
 La foule a partagé l'émotion croissante.

inspiration from Liszt, and say to his fingers, Reproduce these sounds, these harmonies which have just carried us away ; where could his fingers find the necessary agility ? It is the soul which makes them fly like thought ; the body is not capable, however broken in it may be, to repeat such an exercise mechanically ; it is not learned, it is a gift of heaven ! Liszt is one of those artists predestined to let us catch a glimpse of a certain connection between universal life and our individual existence. He raises music to the destination dreamed of by those who have thought that eternal blessedness consisted in always listening to music.

On entend éclater, dans ces savants accords
 De longs cris déchirants, d'impétueux transports,
 Puis aussitôt l'expression plaintive
 D'un chant suave et pur calme l'âme pensive,
 Il frappe à coups pressés le clavier frésuissant,
 Et semble déchainer au gré de son génie,
 Tout un ouragan d'harmonie.
 Poète, il l'a suivi dans son fougueux élan ;
 Il le dompte et l'orage au loin va se perdant ;
 Puis voici revenu ces voix mystérieuses
 Qui charme les douleurs réveuses,
 Nous bercent dans l'oubli, nous entr'ouvrent les cieux . . .
 Liszt captive l'oreille, fascine les yeux.
 Que j'aime de ses traits le changeant caractère,
 Ici l'enthousiasme brûlant
 S'allie avec le sentiment ;
 De son regard profond, caressant ou sevère,
 Mon avide regard ne se peut détacher :
 Je ne sais ce que je préfère,
 De voir Liszt ou de l'écouter.

LISZT AT THE PIANO.

He sits ; behold ! on that pale brow
 Precocious genius hath its seal impressed ;
 And lights the fire in that all-powerful eye
 Where sits the artist's soul.
 His sweet and pensive smile
 Spreads o'er his face a charm unspeakable,
 Bright as a rainbow in a stormy sky . . .
 He preludes ; listen, friends ! be nought but ear.
 Under his hands inspired the obedient keys
 Grow living, and send forth a language eloquent ;
 Language of passion piercing to the heart
 As from the heart it sprang : the crowd partakes
 The growing passion. From the learned chords
 Lugubrious cries burst forth, impetuous transports ;
 Then the low, plaintive note
 Of a song, soft and pure, calms the hurt soul,
 The blows redouble, and the shuddering keys,

Obedient to his will, let loose a hurricane
Of wondrous harmony. A poet he,
And follows with his ardent flight,
Taming the storm that hides itself afar :
And then come back voices mysterious,
Charming our dreamy griefs,
Cradling us in forgetfulness, opening a glimpse of heaven. . . .
Liszt captivates the ear, enchanting the eye.
Oh ! how I love the changing character,
Of those fair features ; here a burning zeal
Unites with sentiment ; from his deep look,
Caressing or severe, my greedy eye
Cannot detach itself. Nor can I say
Which I prefer—to see Liszt or to listen.

In spite of the laurel wreaths which were cast at him by criticism and poetry—nay by the musicians themselves, who, at his concert (April) applauded him with a flourish—the Genevese public kept aloof from our artist. The “Allgemeine musicalischer Zeitung” reports as follows concerning this striking circumstance: “Liszt has played so often and gratuitously, that when he wished to give a concert for himself, the general interest in his playing was already so far satisfied that the room was very thinly attended.” But another reason may be given for this incomprehensible indolence of the Genevese, which was, at the time, strongly censured and railed at by “L’Europe Centrale” in a long and, by the way, tasteless article ; it would be more correct to regard it as an expression of sound Swiss

sense, which had no understanding for the "great passions" sung at that time by the Romanticists; insulted by what they considered public audacity. With citizen narrowness they ignored the artist, a proceeding contrasting strongly with his high-hearted, ever-ready beneficence. This did not, however, prevent him from continuing his course of lessons at the Conservatoire, nor the Genevese from taking them. The circumstances of his private life explain the coolness of the Genevese with tolerable certainty. Liszt himself appears to have been of that opinion; for when once, by chance, the Leipsic remark was mentioned to him, he burst out with the heroic openness and irony so peculiar to him: "On account of my *vie scandaleuse* as they called it; that's why they didn't come!"

Different personages in Geneva eminent for intelligence and cultivation were less cool towards Liszt than the public. It was no excited circle of artists and *literati*, as in Paris, to which he attached himself. They were for the most part *savants*, calm investigators and thinkers, superior to him in years and experience. Among these were Adolphe Pictet, as zealous a scholar of the philosopher Schelling as he was a spiritual author, son of the worthy Genevese astronomer, Marc Auguste Pictet; then the aged Simonde

de Sismondi, so widely known by his great linguistic attainments and his works on the history of literature, who, although advanced in years, shared the modern views on art and poetry with almost youthful enthusiasm; the botanist, A. P de Candolle, famous in his time; the orientalist, Alphonse Denis; Jean James Fazy, who played a distinguished part in Swiss politics, and others.

Though these men could not always share Liszt's views, inclined as he was to eccentricities of all sorts, that was no hindrance to their intercourse; neither did the circumstance that their connection was not of an artistic nature interfere with their friendship. And Liszt, who had within him a lively necessity for all that bore the name of "knowledge," joyfully greeted every new source that opened up to him in that direction. He discussed philosophical questions with Pictet, received botanical explanations from De Candolle, and Denis excited him to oriental studies, to which he devoted himself with great zeal and with such interest that he even projected a journey to the East.

Liszt also came in contact with persons of high society, who were assembled in Geneva from the most distant lands of Europe. Some of these were not without influence on his later social and personal relations. In particular,

the *spirituelle* and exceedingly musical Polish Countess, Marie Potocka, at that time living in Geneva, took a great interest in the youth, and would not allow her judgment to be influenced or led astray by his romantic *pas d'amour*. She had very large connections, even in Paris, especially with the Countess d'Apponyi, and could report many things in his favour to the aristocracy there, with whom he was in high disgrace.

His intercourse with the Italian Prince, Belgiojoso, begun in Paris, was continued here during the summer of 1835. He often practised with the latter, who possessed a beautiful and nobly schooled voice. Their mutual concert in favour of the Italian refugees—Belgiojoso was a zealous patriot, though not on a large scale, like his wife, Christine, who has become famous as an authoress and patriotess—gave a deeper stamp to their connection.

But the most abiding influences on Liszt, as an artist, during his residence in Geneva, came less from his personal connections than from the beauty and magnificence of the surrounding nature. The richness of the Alpine world led him to make many excursions in the immediate neighbourhood of Geneva, as well as in distant cantons. He wandered over all the mountain chains and valleys from Mont Blanc to the

Lake of Wallenstädt. Liszt always undertook his excursions in company with the Countess d'Agoult, several times also with other friends. Much has been given to the public concerning one of his trips. It is a mountain tour to Chamounix which Liszt made in company with the Countess, George Sand, and her two children, Maurice and Solange, Adolphe Pictet, and "Puzzi" in October, 1836.

George Sand had accepted Liszt's invitation, and had travelled to Geneva, whence this tour was made on muleback. Adolphe Pictet has devoted a whole book to it,¹ and George Sand has immortalized it in the most splendid manner in her "Lettres d'un Voyageur." With few but ingeniously drawn traits she gives the characteristic *contours* of the participators, and many a cheerful and serious intermezzo of this journey. Here stands the grave major (A. Pictet), ever ready to philosophize with Schelling in his pocket; beside him Franz (Liszt) full of humane, sky-soaring ideals, and eagerly catching up every new notion there; the dignified Lady Arabella (Comtesse d'Agoult), with a quick comprehension of things; and here herself (George Sand) "paresseux, nonchalant et orgueilleux de mon ignorance comme un sauvage."

¹ "Une Course à Chamounix." Conte fantastique. Genève, Cherbuliez et Cie. Last edition, 1872.

With enchanting humour she relates the discussion of Schelling's proposition : "The absolute is identical with itself"—an inextinguishable source of conversation, especially between Pictet and Liszt, which forms the nucleus of Pictet's narrative. In this work are collected together the materials of conversation of the spirited and playful company. How rich, varied, and witty these in general were is seen in the chapter, "Pensées détachées." They place the points and *résumés* of their conversations, pursued in all directions, into short spiritual aphorisms, often clothed in drastic images, and touching all the higher questions of life, of the time, of politics, and above all of art and artists. Propositions such as the following savour of many an interesting debate :—

Faire de la législation et de la politique avec du sentiment et de l'imagination, c'est atteler deux beaux papillons à la plus lourd des charrues.

[To legislate and treat of politics with sentiment and imagination, is to attach two beautiful butterflies to the heaviest of ploughs.]

Transplanter un arbre malade en coupant avec soin tout les racines pour lui redonner de la vigueur ; recette infaillible, au dire des novateurs, qui veulent tout améliorer sans tenir compte du passé.

[Transplant a sick tree carefully, cutting all the roots, to restore it to vigour ; an infallible receipt, according to innovators who wish to ameliorate everything without taking the past into account.]

Il y a des gens qui, pour le bien de l'humanité, tel qu'ils l'entendent, sacrifieraient volontiers tout ce qui fait la gloire et la grandeur de l'humanité : l'art, la poésie, la foi, la science. Dans leur zèle empressé, ils jetteraient l'équipage par-dessus bord pour sauver le navire.

[There are people who, for the good of humanity as they understand it, would willingly sacrifice all that makes the glory and the grandeur of humanity : art, poetry, faith, science. In their eager zeal, they would throw the crew overboard to save the ship.]

L'Utopie de l'égalité de fait, de l'égalité matérielle entre tous les hommes, ne peut naître que dans une âme très généreuse ou très meprisable, selon qu'il y aurait à donner ou à prendre. Les plus généreux Utopistes sont les hommes de talent et de génie, qui perdraient mille fois plus que les riches dans le partage.

[The Utopia of positive equality, of material equality among all men, can only spring from very generous or very contemptible souls, according as they would have to give, or to take. The most generous Utopists are the men of talent or of genius, who would lose a thousand times more than the rich in the division.]

Ceux qui rêvent ici-bas l'égalité des biens, se trompent non seulement de date mais de monde ; l'égalité ne s'établira que négativement, par l'absence même des biens matériels, dans la vie future.

[Those who dream of the equality of goods here below mistake not only the date but the world ; equality will never be established otherwise than negatively, by the fact that there are no material goods in the life to come.]

Tirer un homme à quatre chevaux pour accélérer sa croissance ; voilà ce que font les gens qui voudraient développer le genre humain à coups de révolutions.

[Quarter a man to increase his growth ; that is what those people do who wish to develop humanity by dint of revolutions.]

Nouvelle formule de progrès : Marche ! ou je t'assomme.
[New formula of progress : March ! or I knock you down.]

La religion est le véritable cément des édifices sociaux et surtout des républiques. Plus les pierres sont nombreuses et menues, plus le cément doit être fort pour les unir. Les faiseurs de sociétés comprennent cela par instinct et s'efforcent de faire du cément ; mais, par malheur, la recette en est perdue.

[Religion is the true cement of the social edifice, especially in republics. The smaller and more numerous the stones, the stronger the cement ought to be to unite them. The makers of societies understand that by instinct, and try to make the cement ; but, unfortunately, the receipt is lost.]

À proprement parler, toute idée progressive n'est bonne et vraie que lorsqu'elle devient réalisable. Les impatients ne conçoivent pas cela ; ils avancent les aiguilles de leur montre, et s'imaginent hâter le cours du temps.

[Properly speaking, all ideas of progress are only good and true when they become realizable. The impatient do not understand this ; they advance the hands of their watch and imagine they hasten the course of time.]

Mettre la puissance d'un grand talent au service des passions publiques, c'est livrer aux Turcs les statues de Phidias pour en faire de la chaux.

[To place the power of a great talent at the service of political passions, is to deliver the statues of Phidias to the Turks to make lime.]

Il y a de grandes erreurs qui sont plus près du vrai que de petites vérités.

[There are great errors which are nearer the truth than little truths.]

Pour que la génie brille de son éclat immatériel et divin, il faut qu'il soit placé entre les deux pôles du vrai et du bien ; comme le charbon dans la pile galvanique. Alors il luit, sans se consumer, de la plus éblouissante lumière. Enflammé par le fer vulgaire des passions, il ne répand qu'une lueur rougeâtre, et se détruit lui-même en propageant l'incendie.

[For genius to shine with its divine and immaterial splendour,

it should be placed between the two poles of truth and goodness, as the charcoal in the galvanic battery. Then it shines with its most dazzling light without being consumed. Inflamed by the fire of vulgar passions, it sheds only a lurid glare, and destroys itself by kindling all around it.]

Les plus belles créations du génie sont celles qui succèdent à l'époque des passions. L'expérience de la vie doit précéder l'art ; mais l'art veut du calme et s'accorde mal des orages du cœur. Les montagnes les plus belles de notre globe sont des volcans éteints.

[The most beautiful creations of genius are those which succeed to the epoch of the passions. The experience of life ought to precede art ; art requires repose, and does not suit with the storms of the heart. The finest mountains of our globe are extinguished volcanoes.]

Les fautes du génie portent avec elles leur absolution.

[The faults of genius bear their own absolution.]

L'huître se vante et dit : "Je n'ai jamais erré !" Hélas ! pauvre huître ! c'est que tu n'as jamais marché.

[The oyster boasts and says : "I have never gone astray !" Alas, poor oyster ! thou hast never walked.]

Si vous voulez arriver au vrai, réconcilez-vous avec vos contraires ; la lumière blanche ne résulte que de la réunion des rayons colorés du spectre.

[If you wish to arrive at truth, be reconciled to what is contrary ; the white light only results from the union of the coloured rays of the spectrum.]

La pensée est à l'action ce que la lumière est à la chaleur. La vie ne se développe que par l'union des deux principes. Toutefois si la lumière sans chaleur reste stérile, la chaleur sans lumière n'enfante que des cryptogames difformes ou nuisibles.

[Thought is to action what light is to heat. Life is developed only by the union of the two principles. If light without heat remains sterile, heat without light only brings forth deformed or hurtful cryptogamia.]

Si vous condamnez la pensée, soyez certains que la pensée vous condamne.

[If you condemn thought, be certain that thought condemns you.]

Séparez la philosophie de la poésie, et vous n'aurez qu'une trame sans broderie, ou qu'une broderie sans trame.

[Separate philosophy from poetry, and you will have the woof without embroidery, or the embroidery without the woof.]

Les hommes de génie, considérés comme individus, ne sont que les vases dans lesquels viennent à fleurir ces merveilleuses végétaux qui déploient leurs trésors embaumés une fois par siècle seulement. Les nains de chaque époque ne voient et ne critiquent que le vase de terre ou de bois, tandis que, bien au-dessus de leurs têtes, le *cactus grandiflorus* étale ses magnificences et répand ses parfums.

[Men of genius, considered as individuals, are only the vases in which those marvellous plants blow, which unfold their balmy treasures only once in an age. The dwarfs of each epoch only see and criticize the vessel of wood or earth, while far above their heads the *cactus grandiflorus* displays its magnificence and sheds its perfumes.]

The most extravagant artist-humour went side by side with these serious conversations. Both George Sand and Adolphe Pictet relate how, in the continual interchange of seriousness and mirth, a harmless, artistic playfulness held the sceptre. George Sand wore her historical blouse-costume, and her children, as well as Liszt and "Puzzi," had adopted a similar light travelling dress, wearing their hair long, *à la* Liszt. Their faces were sunburnt; no wonder that, with their joyousness and their jests, they

were taken for a company of itinerant equestrians, and that the host of the Union at Chamounix thought proper to count his spoons several times daily, and the Englishwomen who lodged in the same hotel veiled themselves and barricaded their doors at night, to be safe from the attacks of this wild horde, "among whom they could not decide which was man, or which woman, which the master, or which the servant."

Liszt had designated himself in the "Livre des Étrangers" of the hotel as a philosophical musician, born on Parnassus, coming from Doubt, going to Truth. Underneath, in the countess's handwriting, stood the following *signalement*—

Noms des Voyageurs	...	...	...	Famille Piffoëls.
Domicile	...	...	...	La Nature.
D'où ils viennent	...	...	...	De Dieu.
Où ils vont	...	...	...	Au ciel.
Lieu de naissance	...	...	...	Europe.
Qualités	...	...	...	Flâneurs.
Date de leur titres	...	...	...	Toujours.
Detériorés par qui	...	...	...	Par l'opinion publique.

And in the midst of all these eccentricities, and genial chatterings and discussions, Music raised her golden pinions and awakened in their minds those sounds which, like the problems of the incomprehensible, raise the human spirits above themselves. Where they found churches possessing organs, they settled themselves for a while,

a small congregation listening to the inspirations of musical genius. This was the case at Bulle and at Fribourg.

In the latter town the travellers had wandered to the cathedral, less to admire the architecture than to make the acquaintance of the organ, the splendid work of the organ-builder, Mooser, living in the said city. It was towards evening when they entered the church, and it had rained. The slender lines of the Gothic arches already began to lose themselves in shadow, surrounded by the mysteries of the holy place. Liszt sat before the organ; near him stood Mooser, who was to work the stops—a grey-haired man, but beaming with happiness over his work. His little circle of hearers followed every movement with constrained attention. They had already learned in Bulle, where Liszt had tried one of Mooser's organs, how inspiration seized him in such moments, and all the ideas, feelings, and impressions which lay in his experience once again revived in him, and, converted into tones, wove themselves into an artistic hymn.

To-day they expected something similar, for many an earnest thought had been exchanged, and conversations about humanity and its eternal aims had raised their feelings to lofty flights; the tourists were also to separate in Fribourg, and the melancholy of parting had

already taken possession of them. When now Liszt sat before the organ, the first sound at once betrayed the deep excitement of feeling which longed to burst forth. But, as though he held back the breath which was struggling from his breast, his fingers began to intone *pianissimo* Mozart's "Dies Iræ," mixed with modulations that died like shadows in the deep. Then suddenly the tones of the organ sounded forth in a mighty *fortissimo*, and then the harmonies rolled like a restrained and then unchained deluge, and rushed through the precincts of the house of God.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando judex est venturus,

exclaimed the authoress, shuddering and over-powered by the force of his inspiration. In her fancy, so susceptible to music, the "Dies Iræ" became a living thing, and apocalyptic images and wonders passed before her, forms of alternate light and shadow.

The artist before his organ was only the expression of what moved him. "Never," as George Sand expresses herself; "Never did the outline of his Florentine profile appear purer or paler than under this dark inspiration of mystic horror and religious mournfulness."

Pictet, like the authoress, was seized by his improvisation, but while with her the tones floated

on the waves of fancy, he sought to follow the contents of the musical themes. In his relation of their journey, giving words to the impressions he describes them as follows :

An Adazio began (writes Pictet) of a gloomy, severe character. Undecided, sombre modulations followed, interlaced with a series of dissonances and winding like mist with mist. From time to time more decided forms arose, as if seeking embodiment and light. Now they vanished again, amidst other fleeting figures, which only appeared to flit away instantaneously. If one had sought to render the effect of this music into painting, only a mighty soul could have done it, which, full of restlessness and excitement, full of doubt and passion, struggles in vain to find the decisive word of destiny, or else the lofty representation of chaos, when ancient nature begat formless creations, with infinite force, in the realm of eternal night.

When the suspense had reached its highest point, the introduction ended, and a serious, decided thema, like a maxim of classic wisdom, began ; executed slowly by the deep majestic roll of the organ, then from the higher voices, in regular cadence, passing into the fugue style of Meister Sebastian Bach. To this earnest, solemn thema was added, as a contrast, a second, quick and brilliant, that, while the first resembled rather a monotonous greatness, seemed fitted for every change and transformation. Whilst the execution of the first was strictly submitted to the laws of harmony, the other moved freely in the most unexpected combinations and astonishing effects.

And now began a peculiar contest between the two. Boldly the lighter thema seized his earnest antagonist, and displayed all the elfish tricks of art, playfully dancing around him to allure him from his regular course into the abysses of dissonance. In the most brilliant tones of the organ it launched forth gracefully into a thousand tormenting caprices, until it flamed up angrily at its steadfast, earnest, measured opponent, and passed, full of passion and fire, into tones of mockery and scorn. At last, summoning all their powers, the two themas intertwine ; complainings, cries of pain, strange sounds arose from the struggle ;

it was as though Laocoön, pressed in the serpent's folds, were seeking powerfully, but in vain, to tear himself from the torturing thrall. But the end of the contest was quite different. The first thema asserted its supremacy and drove the other back into the keynote. The disturbed harmony returned, and, with indescribable art, the two were united into one thema, to an expression of perfect grandeur and splendour, sentiment and passion, power and grace. And this new thema, unfolded with all the *verve* of genius, and represented by all the resources of the magnificent instrument, a lofty hymn, closed the artist's improvisation.

When the organ had ceased and the artist approached his friends, George Sand called out to him enthusiastically—

“ You are our Meister in everything. You ! devoted to this magical and enchanting speech ! What eloquence ! In truth, no poetry could replace this spiritual language which you speak to the heart. Your signs, your revelations are not lost ; they penetrate into the depth of one's being.”

Liszt's hands trembled, drops of perspiration stood on his brow, and his gleaming eyes were damp.

“ Friends,” he said earnestly, “ we are about to part. May the remembrance of these days never pass from our memories ! May we also never forget that art and science, poetry and thought, the beautiful and the true, are the two archangels who open the golden doors to the temple of humanity.”¹

¹ From A. Pictet.

They quitted the cathedral.

The next day the company separated. Pictet had other travelling aims in view, and Liszt with the countess, and George Sand with her children returned to Geneva.

These remained together, till the middle of December, the authoress and her family inhabiting the garret which had already been prepared for them the year before. Days full of intellectual enjoyment and artistic incitement followed. Liszt's hands often glided over the "instrument with the mother-of-pearl keys," giving themselves up to the inner voice of genius. George Sand then sat listening by the chimney-fire, or turned her large eyes to the magnificent scenes of nature, while, incited by the music, she followed her dreams involuntarily, and embodied his harmonies in words.

At this time Liszt composed his *Rondo fantastique*, on a song by Manuel Garcia, that had met with universal applause through the spirited rendering of his daughter Malibran. He gave it the title of the song, "*El Contrabandista*," and dedicated it to George Sand—"à Monsieur G. Sand," according to a Leipsic edition of the *Rondo*, 1837; a Vienna one of 1839, on the contrary, dedicated it "à Madame G. Sand." When Liszt had finished this composition, he

played it to her, as she herself relates, in the twilight of an autumn evening. Carried away by the tones, excited by the perfume of a Havannah, lulled by the ebb and flow of the lake lying before her, she was moved as by an enchanter's wand, opening the gates of poesy. She wrote the whole night, as was her custom ; and the next day she read to her friends a lyrical story, "Le Contrebandier," into which she had worked up the images which Liszt's music had awakened in her—the poetic translation of a piece of music. This was something new. The musician had of old created from poetic sources, but never had the poet borrowed from the musician. Jules Janin therefore called out to the Parisians in astonishment: ". . . In the midst of these rough attempts there comes—hear! hear!—there comes from the mountain, hand in hand, 'musician and poet,' Franz Liszt and his companion, George Sand. And this time—wonderful transformation of things—the musician does not set tones to the poet's words, but the poet gives words to the musician's notes!"¹

It is strange George Sand's muse had no influence on Liszt in this direction. In spite of her deep sentiment for music, she did not touch his feelings, and the dedication of his

¹ "Gazette musicale de Paris," 1837. No. 9.

“Kontrabandisten Rondo” is the only souvenir of this connection.

The friends remained together in Geneva till the middle of November. Liszt wished then to leave France and Switzerland entirely. His thoughts were turned towards the East; the countess, on the contrary, induced particularly by George Sand’s Italian journey, was inclined for Italy. Consequently the plan of travel was arranged, first to Italy, then to the East.

But first, a promise made to his friend Berlioz, to assist at a concert given by him, called Liszt to Paris. Here he remained till the end of the musical season, during which he was the nucleus of concert life.

The countess, meanwhile, stayed at Château Rohant, the memorable seat of the French authoress—a court of the muse of Romanticism.

XX.

COMPOSITIONS OF THE GENEVA PERIOD.

Influence of nature on Liszt's creative fancy. Liszt as a lyrico-musical poet. His Swiss Album ("Album d'un Voyageur"). The tender, the Titanic, and the demoniac. Religion the principal spiritual feature of his compositions in union with a feeling for nature. Pastoral and storm. Formal direction. Harmonies. Second edition of the Album.

I.

LISZT had produced a great deal during his Geneva period. Several compositions for the pianoforte lie before us which are intimately connected with his Swiss wanderings ; nay, are inseparable from them. They are no mere echoes of travel which fix afterwards the experiences of this or that moment ; no, they are the expressions themselves, such as nature with her poesy gave at the moment, the very moods, such as they rose in him at the moment of communion with her, yet composed in a tone—no temporary improvisation at the organ, but firm, free outpourings of a spirit under the excitement of fancy and poetic emotion.

His Swiss compositions form the complementary and, at the same time, essential part of what, as a poet and literary man, he bequeathed to later generations, of his excursions undertaken from Lake Leman. They inform us how deeply nature had seized his artistic imagination, how strongly she had excited his poetic feelings, and how full an echo she found in the forms of his individual fancy. They speak of Liszt's deep feeling for nature, that seeks, as it were, to come to an understanding with her, and is significative as standing at the entrance of that period in which the height of his youthful vehemence, of his new-born ardour and poetic feeling, was seeking to adjust itself; for the genuine lyric poet is to be recognized in the feeling for nature, which impels him to draw from the eternal, living fountain of lyricism health for his inmost soul. The lyric poet feels in nature, himself and the movements of his soul. Her silent creations, her intimate emotions, her ferments and storms—those are the images of his own, now secretly silent, now stormily moved, being. And while the sounds of nature first arouse and then echo his thoughts, and he sees and finds himself in them, at the same time she awakens in true genius that wondrous something which he bears within him, sleeping and waking, that preserves him

from those maladies of the spirit to which talent often succumbs; that something which links him with nature.

It is clearly evident that Nature has influenced Liszt's productive fancy in both directions, awakening form and idea. His Swiss compositions are evidence of this. He here appears as a lyric poet, yet otherwise than the exclusively musical lyricist, who only receives a mood of nature naïvely within himself and renders it in his compositions purely as feeling, either strong or tender. Hereby all that is objective is melted into mood and only mood. The perception as belonging to thought or idea is, as it were, extinguished in the vibration of feeling.

Not so with Liszt. His lyrics in this respect, although filled with the mood of the moment, are not lost in it. His feeling and fancy hold fast the object which has excited them; hereby he approaches the lyrical poet who, in representing his feelings, takes images and momenta from nature and transfers them to his poem, expressing by them his own life of emotion, his woe and his delight, his sorrow and his passion. No poet better illustrates this side of lyricism than Goethe. The "Ruhe über den Wipfeln," "Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt," Schäfer's "Klagelied," "Mignon"—his finest songs ex-

press in the most perfect and wondrous manner by sensible images his frame of mind and his sympathy with nature. These sensible images are, of course, less at the command of the tone-poet than the word-poet, none the less although, in a more constrained manner, the former *can* express himself by means of characteristic tone-painting. Those images are naturally nearer to him which reach his perception through the ear, and in contradistinction to the designation "visual pictures" may be called, and not falsely indeed, "acoustic pictures." In the whispering of the leaves, in the rustling of the brook, in the rushing of waters, in the raging of the winds, in the unchaining of the elements on the one hand, and on the other, in the echo, in the varied song of birds, &c., Nature gives a series of perceptible acoustic pictures, which the tone-poet draws into his fancy, to express his lyrical sentiment by them. Ear and eye pictures such as those named are perceptible, comprehensible to all. But those lie deeper which, "mysterious in the light of day," only reveal themselves to the spirit, only speak to the children of the soul. Here begins the Undefinable.

It is certain that this undefinable as well as the definable are found in those compositions of Liszt. Both flow together—a speechless, yet powerful, and gently soaring spirit-life, that,

although wrapped in a lyric veil, preserves a clear glance above and around. Like the lyric poet, floating between thought and feeling, he expresses and breathes out, but in tones, a part of his inward soul; in images conveyed to his fancy both by eye and ear. To those who understand, to those who know how to plunge into poetry and into the inner world of nature, and to read its language transformed into musical speech, his Swiss compositions will relate much of the *one* rhythm which runs through all forms of life and spirit, even of music; of the *one* law according to which they, and music with them, are governed. And in the background, perhaps, on one side the Alpine world will rise, appearing like an embodied law of magnificent grandeur; while, on the other, meadow, lake, and sea, breathing a sunny cheerfulness, will unfold the poetic charm of the irrefragable unity of nature and of spirit.

His compositions, and especially those for the pianoforte, did not bring into full play his inward and poetic sympathy with nature, feelings which were not fully developed till the appearance of his later orchestral works—the magnificent and mighty gradation which, like massive mountain chains of sound, rise in a *crescendo*; the weaving and invention of tones which belong particularly to his pastoral pieces

that, like the play of a sunbeam with the mountain air, charm the soul into a peacefully cheerful mood; the contrasts of the powerful and the tender, which at the same time make one tremble and weep—yet his compositions at this time show unmistakeably the deep harmony of his spirit with nature and her workings. They point to the impressions received and to their mental elaboration, and, finally, while they manifest how his fancy expanded according to the surroundings of his life, which until then had been more affected by the poetry of words than of tone, they also display a striving after objectivity and conformity to the laws of composition. On the whole, by them the “creative germs” are organically continued.

The compositions of his Geneva epoch, which are closely connected with the impressions received in his Alpine wanderings, were published by Liszt in the year 1842,¹ in three volumes, under the general title, “Album d’un Voyageur, Compositions pour le Piano,” an edition which is no longer in circulation. These three volumes, each of which, distinguished by a separate title, contains such pieces as are connected in mood and manner, thus divide the whole of the compositions into three groups. The first volume contains, under the title

¹ Tobias Haslinger, Vienna (1842).

“Impressions et Poésies,”¹ six musical pieces, or, more properly, musical poems, in the characteristic tone-painting of which—with the exception of the first number “Lyon,” which, as is already known, belongs to a previous period—the harmonious consonance of the composer’s mood becomes one with that of nature.

Most of them, to abide by the expression already used, have acoustic images for their principal motive, which to the fancy of the hearer takes the inscription as a clue, are embodiments of the tangible pictures in the real world. In the piece “Au Lac de Wallenstädt,” for instance, the soft rippling of the waves is the acoustic image which forms the motive; this latter in turn, from its continuous repetition, forms a life-like picture of the lake. While the uniform rhythmical movement of the motive retains this image, we feel, through the harmony and the interwoven melody, the sunshine spread over the softly undulating surface, and the warm air which plays around it. We still hear, but only mechanically, the faint rocking of the water—the soul dreams on to that unconscious breathing which flows together with the *niente* of the ether.

“Au lac de Wallenstädt” belongs to the

¹ The three volumes at the time were published separately, with their respective titles, by Haslinger.

most perfect lyrical tone-poetry, to that of which it may be said that it has listened to Nature in her silent home. Nothing alien enters into it—no dissonance, no human sound ; every tone is poetry—pure poetry. If we would give a pendant to this piece from poetic art, we know only one that, in an equally perfect manner, expresses the unity of the poet's mood with that of nature : Goethe's “ Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh.” Both have the same full diving of the soul into the mood of Nature, and both, with word and tone,—the former after it has raised itself to thought, the latter, after it has carried on the motion to a feeling of strength—sink faintly back into the depths of the *I*: a dream into infinitude.

All the six numbers of this volume do not stand in the same unison with the moods of nature, through the elements of sight and hearing, as “ Au Lac de Wallenstädt,” and all have not, like this enchanting tone-poem, held fast an image of Nature.

In the composition, “ Les Cloches de G——,” the chimes are by no means preserved, as the foundation, through the whole piece, as is the motion of the lake in the other piece. That mood is designated in its character. On a solitary mountain height, where only the speaking silence of nature surrounds us, with the sky above, the

feelings are raised and elevated by the sudden peal of a sonorous bell in the depths of the valley. Though the bells grow dumb, they vibrate still in the flight of the soul, to which they have given the direction.

In the second volume, in contrast to the first, the moods of nature appear less strongly characterized. They are preponderatingly purely lyrical in a musical sense. The acoustic and visual elements are not always so tangible as in the former volume, and remind us of Goethe's words, "Mysterious in the light of day." Yet through sounds and melodious motives here and there, they give bright glances to the perception in regard to the charms inseparable from life in the Alps, such as the "Ranz des Vaches," the "Shepherd's Pipe," and others. On the whole, they are universal lyrical moods, which the composer binds into a bouquet of great promise with the general designation, "Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes." One must not of course think of a modern herbarium. His nine "Alpine flowers" are nameless. Neither inscription nor motto accompanies them, and so they tell sufficiently that they have nothing to do with botanical acquirements.

The third volume, "Paraphrases,"¹ contains

¹ These three pieces had appeared already in 1836 in a collection of pieces for pianoforte of different favourite com-

three larger compositions: *Improvisato*, *Nocturne*—which should properly be designated a “Night-scene”—and an *Allegro*, “*Allegro Finale*.” Their contents are essentially different from the pieces in the other volumes. While *they* principally remain in *one* mood, these give place to varied fancies—effervescence, thunder heat, storm wind, peace. Elements of feeling which were there expressed singly in one composition here pass the narrow bounds of lyricism and seize the lyrical mobility, not as a single mood, but in contrasting succession. These pieces are rather dramatically moved nature-and-soul pictures, than lyrical blossoms and travelling impressions.

On the whole the Swiss Album struck a new musical lyric string, which, although its echo has long since died away, nevertheless developed itself to a whole gamut of different tones. To draw the impressions of nature into music in the way which Liszt has done had never till then been thought of, and before he published these compositions, musical essays of contemporary authors spoke of his “three monstrous volumes” as of a book of Solomon. One alluded

posers of that day, which the firm, C. Ruop, Basle, published under the title “*L'Echo des Alpes Suisses*.” In this collection they were Nos. 2, 6, 9. They appeared at the same place in separate editions under the title “*Trois Airs Suisses*,” by Franz Liszt.

to mountains, lakes, valleys, and wonders of nature which they were to contain ; another recognized in them Liszt's operatic capabilities, nay, called them "an opera without words." For us they serve, first of all, as materials representing his individual development as a creative artist ; then the moods and feelings which he has here brought to expression, in union with the impressions of nature, present the spiritual foundations of his artistic originality.

Bearing the latter in mind, we clearly recognize three characteristics of his genius. For the most part, it is true, they appear in union, but not so that they cannot be distinguished from each other ; now one, now the other, stands in the foreground, according to the height and character of the mood. These peculiarities show themselves in their extremes—on one side as an exceeding tenderness and fervour of sentiment, and on the other as an equally Titanic and demoniac strength—two points in which lies his sympathy with nature, in which also, we might perhaps say, the earth-side of his feelings moves. The third, on the contrary, belongs to his fundamentally religious mood, which spreads itself over the others as a consecrating and solemn mood, or rather penetrates or irradiates them with its spiritual ether. It also impels

the real powers of nature into the domain of spirit, and places them at the service of the ideal.

The *religious* element consequently unites and poetically idealizes the other feelings, and therefore does not stand in the foreground. It runs through his harmonies like a secret that we only half presage, half feel from its effects. To it we especially ascribe that tenderly spiritual sentiment which so irresistibly overcomes the mind in all Liszt's secular music, and which can only be compared with that which we experience before a horizon extending itself indefinitely, or which creeps over us in the fading glow of twilight, when our souls enjoy, as it were, a foretaste of infinity. These are sentiments which belong to so lofty and so pure a sphere, that only the true lyrical genius can reveal them fully and purely, either in word, in tone, or in colouring ; but music unveils them with the greatest fervour. Their spirituality is also warmth, and they thus, through word and colour, render the unspeakable, which language has sought to indicate by the designation of "the music of the spheres." Such floating sentiments, however, are not to be mistaken for that sentimentality so prevailing in music, which produces a sense of blessedness, in which feeling itself becomes enjoyment, and, so to speak,

hovers between heaven and earth, believing itself to be Psyche, and yet secretly it is rather Physis. Liszt's lyrics know nothing of such materialism. It is significative of them, and belongs to their specific characteristics, that they spring more from fancy and thought than from the feelings. The bond, however, that unites the whole spirit is founded on his religious tendency.

The traces of his devotional feelings can be followed in the Swiss Album in the most different directions. Not mere poetically religious breathings, they bear the deeper impress of true piety. This sets the "Glocken Genfs" in motion, and speaks in the nightly peace of the "Nocturno" (the second paraphrase).

His moods of nature and impressions of travel are chiefly discernible in the "Alpenblumen," which, for the most part, move on the basis of natural harmonies, and are hereby distinguished in their general style as echoes of nature. Their especial character, however, is strongly marked as a pastoral mood by the drawing in of motives, now in the form of echoes, now in that of certain sounds, which are inseparably linked with the vocation of the herdsman and with the Alpine horn.

The religious breathes into the more cheerful element the sunny peace of God's nature, which

acts as a *consecration*. We emphasize the word "consecration," for the pastoral is inconceivable without such. It is, as it were, the religious breath of nature which the latter exhales. This sanctifying entrance of the religious into the natural mood produces in main the pastoral, which represents the thought of the unbroken and untroubled unity between God and nature. This fundamental principle underlies all Liszt's later Pastorals. All the germs lie ready in the "Alpenblumen." They are the forerunners, yet through the inweaving of musical motives exclusively belonging to the inhabitants of the Alps, they have a certain local colouring which has no connection with the Pastoral in general. The third number of the "Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes"—it is designated as "Allegro Pastorale"—bears especially the character of a Swiss Pastoral in the above-mentioned sense.

And now the Titanic and demoniac power of feeling! It is always the divine that creates the Titan; and so Liszt's Titanic power is to be sought for in the force and susceptibility of his fancy, which, impelled by the passion of his temperament—the source of the demoniac—conquers, as with the force of fire, the height and breadth of the boundary which seems set to human feeling and its artistic expression. Liszt will never be counted among the Neptu-

nians of the race of gods. This demoniacally Titanic strength does not show itself in him as an elementary unconsciousness and blind force of nature. It is subjected to the power of thought, and is urged towards the ideal, constraining the feelings into that sphere of spiritual objectivity, over which the splendour of the ideal is spread. All that is ideal comes from the religious: and so we find also here. The "Wilhelm Tell Kapelle," for instance, in the "Impressions et Poésies," is an example in point. The superscription of this piece, by the way, is not satisfactory, and is only explained in part by the motto added to it: "Einer für alle, alle für einen!" Yet even without this the first bars reveal that it is only the historical designation of a place which conjured up to the composer's imagination the energetic form of the son of the mountain, who was to become the deliverer of his people. That moment appears to have come vividly to Liszt's mind, when the inward cry of oppression, of anger, of thirst for vengeance, has become decision, and the Swiss hero, having reached this decisive point, full of prayer and of wildness, full of a divine courage and of mental uproar, waits for the moment of action.

The struggles of the soul here drive the unbridled natural force even to wildness; but the

religioso restrains it from blind rage. Even the last wild *energico* bears in its harmonies the conclusion, "with God."

Liszt's Titanic and demoniac force appears here as the wild passion of the individual. In sympathy with nature it has created an especial artistic expression, which culminates in the picturing of the unchained powers of nature, especially of the storm—an effect which scarcely any other art can represent more effectively, characteristically, and overpoweringly than music; for she has the means of seizing this natural phenomenon at the height of its working, and giving it the most exact rendering in a work of art—a result which is denied to the poet, who has to rest content with describing a storm. The storm pierces otherwise through bone and marrow when we hear its howling and raging, than when we only see, or even only think about it in the motion of the trees, or of the water. The painter and the musician, with regard to the rendering of the whole of the effects, are more restricted than the poet, but withal can attain greater effect: they have the advantage of representation.

The painter holds a sea tempest before the eye with deceptive resemblance; he paints its hanging clouds, its lightning, its devastations,

but only fixes a single moment of its effects. The water and the trees do not move, the threatening clouds hang constantly on the horizon, and even the lightning remains as if under a charm in its zigzag course—this is the point where the narrowness of the bounds of painting makes itself felt, in representing subjects, such as a storm, which require movement and life. Painting, in rendering it, can awaken in us the moods of gloom, of heaviness, of passion, of mystery, of the demoniacal ; but the immovability of the excited elements, the stillness which surrounds them, takes away our breath, prevents us from freeing ourselves from the oppression of the mood that has been conjured up.

Here Music steps in. She brings with her time and motion, she removes the uneasy stillness, and, by representing the last grumblings and the rolling away of the storm, and letting us feel the clear sky again, she restores the interior calm. No artist therefore can, like the musician, call up to our souls the demoniac power of Nature, with her words of thunder and her lofty terrors. With as overpowering a strength as an inexhaustible richness of fancy Liszt has produced a series of pictures and moments of storm such as scarcely any other master has rivalled. In the symphonetic

domain hereto belonging, at least, he has become the master of masters. He could say, as he often has done, "Storm is my *métier*." No characteristic feature of storm, either on sea or on land, has escaped him : the storm in the "Préludes" in the "St. Elizabeth," in the Oratorio "Christus," in the legend composed for the piano, "St. François de Paula walking on the Waves" — those are speaking witnesses of his musical creations, standing alone in this direction.

In them his demoniac and Titanic powers reach their climax as regards this style of reproducing the effects of nature, just as the tender and the fervid in her moods have, in the Pastoral, found expression distancing all competitors.

The germs of the latter are to be found in the Swiss Album, which possesses also, in the number inscribed "Nocturne," the first of Liszt's storm-pictures ; and as in the other compositions therein contained, a thought, an idea stands in the foreground, and the religious element sheds over it an ideal brightness, so in the "Nocturne" the storm is a night-poem that has its own thought, and its dissonances seek their solution in the starry dome, in the peace of religion. Into the calm, holy repose of nature, over which the veil of night is spread, the

storm suddenly rushes, and affrights and disturbs with its thunder, its lightnings, its wildness, yet without annihilating. It passes over and rolls away in the distance, while repose and divine peace are restored, and Nature continues her slumbering song.

The thought expressed by this first storm-picture, "Passion under the command of higher powers," is the chief feature of all Liszt's compositions of this kind. This idea appears in the series of those "art mirages" which, notwithstanding their exterior magnificence, do not exercise their overpowering effect through such splendour, but through the power that lies in the background, constraining wind and tempest. Liszt's storms remind one of the significant words of Winkelmann,¹ spoken, of course, in reference to plastic art, but nevertheless applicable to the case in point, wherein he says, alluding to the representation of a storm, that, "with the raging, tossing surface of the sea, its silent depths should also be seen, that is, in the highest passion a great and steadfast soul."

After what has been said it is evident that however variously, deeply marked, and sharply the three above-mentioned spiritual characteristics of Liszt's individuality may be expressed,

¹ Vol. i. of his writings, p. 31.

they nevertheless, even when separated from each other, have one common fundamental direction, namely, to give themselves up to a thought, to an idea, in the world of his mind. Even the religious element is made subservient to an end, a significant fact in regard to Liszt's secular lyrics—*secular*, that is, in reference to their later sacred companions, for it tells us that it is not a something separated from the worldly side of his being, and therefore unfruitful, but, as it were, his very flesh and blood, as inseparable from his inner self as the heart from the human organism.

This surrender to poetic ideas points, however, to other things: to the principles of art, which had already begun to develop themselves, so far as music is concerned, in the romantic art-movement called into life by Berlioz. It is evident that the ideas of programme music stand behind Liszt's pieces in the "Reise-Album," but concealed under the lyricism of the moods of nature.

Equally unmistakeable therein is the endeavour to place the subjective feeling under a higher order—an endeavour which the opposing nature of Romanticism, still lingering in the subjective, seeks to annul. Liszt gave inscriptions to the greater part of his compositions, or a motto pointing to a thought and a mood; a

programme would have been out of place, as they do not translate romances, or broadly spun poetic ideas, into tones. In reference to the attacks which both had to suffer at that time, Liszt wrote to George Sand, defending the principle :—

As the musician's language, more than any other, lends itself to undecided and arbitrary interpretations, it is not useless, and, above all, not *laughable*, as they are pleased to say, if the composer, in a few lines, gives a spiritual (psychical) sketch of his work ; if, without minute expositions and anxiously preserved details, he expresses the idea which served as the foundation of his composition.

Liszt's movements, as the first result of his adherence to modern principles, are formally free. In general, as a consequence of his in-born powers, it could not lie in his nature to consent to given laws and formulas, and to plan his compositions in the sense of classical form and symmetry ; yet in his inner consciousness he felt a full justification for his own free course. His compositions are the unrestrained inventive outpourings of a spirit powerfully moved by nature. His poesy moves on firm ground as regards idea and mood ; the form must therefore be immaterial. Its development to perfection is another thing. Good soil does not need that the seed should have already germinated—it may yet lie in embryo ; but every perfect fruit presupposes a healthy soil. The

fervent sympathy with nature is the healthy soil for the lyricist, and at the same time a condition of psychological truth in regard to contents and form. It is clear that Liszt at that time could not measure the deep importance of this for artistic creation in general, but a presage of it arose within him. It sounds as from under a veil when he says to George Sand: "That musician especially who is inspired by Nature, without copying her, breathes out in tones the tenderest secrets of his destiny: he thinks, feels, and speaks through her."

Liszt had not yet fully reached perfection of form in the compositions of his Swiss Album; on the contrary, they show themselves still as in a state of development. They are free from classical doctrines, yet they are everywhere permeated by a delicate feeling of form which renders sensible both the equilibrium of the harmonies and the lines of the melody.

Although the frequent and often immediate change of figures and forms of accompaniment show here and there an uncouth element, while much that is fragmentary points to interior imperfection, with all this the deeply fervent striving after the laws of form is always visible. Compared with what went before, all is here regulated, harmonious, and surprisingly varied—

much as, for instance, the little musical poem, "Au Lac de Wallenstädt"—perfect.

We have still to add a few words on the harmonious part of these compositions. Harmonies are the means of expression of feeling. The more decided the feelings are of their kind, the more original their origin—the more variously they develop themselves—so much the more strongly marked, newer, and richer will the harmonies of the creative genius show themselves as a means of revelation. The most prominent qualities of Liszt's expressions of feeling—the tenderly spiritual, the titanic-demonic, the religious, three different spheres—have opened new harmonious domains of surprising spirituality, overwhelming power, and pure ideality. A wealth of new combinations and turns appears in the Swiss compositions, so that this alone, not to speak of their worth as regards composition and contents, demonstrates a rare creative power; but it must be reserved to the purely musical part of this book to enter into a fuller analysis.

In Liszt's musical biography, therefore, the Swiss Album is, in various directions, the first landmark of the incipient process of clarification, and equally the promising forerunner of the most original creations of art.

In later years—in the Weimar epoch—Liszt

remoulded the Album and laid aside all that was imperfect and unimportant, whereby it happened, as is so often the case in later critical reviews and improvements of youthful works, that many a characteristic feature of the original is effaced and destroyed. The Tell piece and the "Bells of Geneva" have parts which are undoubtedly more strongly marked in their poetic characteristics than in the later version, yet the latter is to be preferred as regards form and effect. In the new edition Liszt has eliminated several numbers. He then published those he had revised and newly worked up, under the title, "Pélerinage en Suisse," master creations in every respect.

To facilitate the review of both editions, we here place the numbers of the old opposite those of the new Album, in the form of an index; the stroke indicating the number which the latter does not contain.

"Album d'un Voyageur."
(Three volumes.)

"Pélerinage en Suisse."
(One volume.)

I. IMPRESSIONS ET POÉSIES.

I. Lyon.

2	{ Au Lac de Wallenstädt. Au Bord d'une Source.	No. 2. No. 4.
3.	Les Cloches de G—.	No. 9.
4.	Vallée d'Obermann.	No. 6.
5.	La Chapelle de Guillaume Tell.	No. 1.
6.	Psaume.	—

II. FLEURS MÉLODIQUES DES ALPES.

1. Allegro.	—
2. Lento.	—
3. Pastorale.	No. 8. Le Mal du Pays.
4. Andante con sentimento.	—
5. Andante molto espressivo.	—
6. Allegro moderato.	—
7. Allegretto.	—
8. Allegretto (d'après Hubert).	—
9. Andantino, &c.	—

III. PARAPHRASES.

1. Improvisato (Ranz des Vaches).	—
2. Nocture (Chant du Montagnard),	—
3. Allegro Finale (Ranz des Chèvres).	No. 7.

In the new working up and arrangement of these compositions, Liszt, holding the artistic scale alone, has entirely left out the "Paraphrases." However interesting and important they may be as materials for the representation of his individual development as an artist, they bore too deep traces of the imperfect to claim full weight as a work of art. At a later time, however, they again appeared in print, with many interesting alterations by the composer, who could not, however, quite overcome the former traces of unfinished ferment. In this re-arrangement for a new edition (Leipsic: C. F. Kahnt,¹ 1877), Liszt, of course, only yielded to the wish of his publisher—a con-

¹ Knap's publishing business in Basle passed over to this firm in 1856.

cession not invariably to be approved, yet not always to be refused. The new edition of these three pieces bears the original title, "Trois Airs Suisses."

The pieces of the Haslinger edition vary with regard to the dedications they bear. The Schott edition has none. The mottoes, on the contrary, for the most part sentences from Byron's "Childe Harold" and Senancourt's "Vallée d'Obermann," remain. Only those of "Les Cloches de Genève," are omitted. The former dedications are not uninteresting in reference to his personal connections, and are therefore inserted.

From the "*Impressions et Poésies.*"

Lyon	...	...	...	...	...	is dedicated to M. de Lamennais.
Au Lac de Wallenstädt					"	"
Au Bord d'une Source				"		Ferd. Denis.
Les Cloches de G—				"		Blondine.
Vallé d'Obermann				"		M. de Senancourt.
La Chapelle de G. Tell				"		Victor Schölcher.

Only three numbers of the "Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes" have dedications. All three, Nos. 1, 4, 7, are dedicated to Madame. H. Reiset.

The "Paraphrases," on the contrary, all have dedications.

Improvisato is dedicated to Madame A. Pictet.

Nocturne	"	"	Madame la Comtesse Marie Potocka.
Allegro et Finale	"		M. le Comte Theobald Walsh.

II.

The discredit of virtuoso compositions. The Fantasias on melodies at the time of the virtuoso epoch. Liszt's rearrangement of these Fantasias. Gives them artistic worth. A new ideal. His Fantasias, Opus 5, 7, 8, 9, 13. Valse, Opus 6. Duet for pianoforte and violin. Dedication.

Liszt's Swiss Album forms only a part of his compositions belonging to the Geneva period; another, not less promising, lies in his transfers and fantasias for the pianoforte. These, although a reflection of his moods of nature also falls upon them, are, with the exception of his Opus 13, unconnected with impressions of scenery. Their background is formed by the *salon* and the concert-room. The Swiss pieces had no other aim than to express the frame of mind and ideas of the composer, free from any other considerations; the task which fell to him as a virtuoso from his connections with the *salon* and the concert-hall appear in his other works as a partial element; connections which have met with most different constructions, and therefore most heterogeneous judgments.

There was a time when every musical virtuoso was regarded as half a juggler, when he was applauded and estimated according to the surprises which his dexterous hands could prepare for eye or ear; when his social position, with all its mutual obligations, did not range

above that of a showman practising sleight of hand. His fame, his often real artistic merit, received from these conceptions as to his mission a doubtful lustre, while the virtuoso himself occupied a dubious position among artists, and the estimate of the man generally influenced the judgment as to the artistic worth of his productions. They separated the virtuoso from the artist, and abstracted all absolute worth from his creative labours; people were wont to expect nothing of merit.

Criticism created an especial rubric for them, giving to their productions the name of "virtuoso work." This word immediately betrayed to every experienced musician and amateur, even to the uninitiated, that the composition to which it was applied might, indeed, possess technical splendour, and even inventive skill, but that as to genuine artistic worth they were to be silent. "Virtuoso work!" The word fell like an anathema on the creative productions of the poor authors, and removed all doubt as to their artistic position. With regard to the works of the genuine Parnassian library, it was known that their worth consisted only in the capability of amusing for a moment.

It cannot therefore be wondered at if, in consequence of this view, such musical forms in particular which came under the virtuoso's

hands were laid under the ban of criticism. In the first half of our century the category of compositions which sighed more especially under this oppression was that which was neither sonata, fugue, nor suite, and yet captivated and rejoiced the music-loving and music-studying children of men—the fantasias on opera melodies.

They were an abomination and a continual vexation to the learned world, but it is not clearly to be distinguished whether these latter men had ever reflected, if this category were in fact so entirely unfruitful in an artistic point of view, and if it were really decreed from the beginning that such compositions never could succeed in becoming a work worthy of art. They persisted in the same idea, that they were fashionable productions of the day and of the time. This was the view which also met Liszt's compositions in this department, and by many they also were ranked among the flippant productions of the time and of the hour. But, the monsters! they would not take their places in the ranks.

Liszt has composed several fantasias on operatic melodies, the first of which falls into his Geneva period. They were, however, continually the objects of blame amongst strict artistic critics, and especially those who, with puritanical earnestness, would not admit the warrantable

many-sidedness of life into art, but offered the crown to the unvarying monotony of custom. At the time of the virtuoso epoch, of course, when the general taste was satisfied by hearing opera melodies worked up exclusively in the brilliant style, executed by virtuosos, such an one-sided criticism was fully justified, and its darts rightly aimed ; as, for instance, those which were shot by the strong-minded Heidelberg Professor Thibart in 1830, with his famous little work, "Ueber Reinheit der Tonkunst." Here puritanism was the defender of a principle against want of principle. His shafts were directed against empty toying with art. But as regards the category itself, it will always have its full justification, its historical importance, and even no small worth from an artistic point of view, however much its mission may have been opposed and criticised.

No one, of course, of cultivated taste and with judgment in music in any degree correct, will think of mistaking for its real representatives those vagabond "fantasias" on vagabond melodies, which have inundated our musical mart the whole century through. Mediocre work and want of fancy do not mean that the category itself is worthless. And then every age has created a form for the entertainment of the *salon*, and the *bravura* of the virtuoso ;

why should not the eighteenth century lay claim to the same privilege? In the seventeenth it was the "highly coloured and high-sounding pieces," in the eighteenth the "variations" and "suites," and in our time the "fantasias on opera melodies," affording greater freedom of movement, and, representing entertainment, mode, and virtuoso technicality, have furnished works of imperishable importance for musical art.

It lies in the mind's historical impulsion towards beauty to work up everything within its domain; it belongs also to the historical economy of the mind that nothing should be lost, but every germ of its organism be formed to a branch from which new shoots germinate. The forms of art representing the direction of the intellectual taste of the times have all become branches out of which other springs have burst forth, but, in all, the productive performance of the virtuoso has been an essential collaboration. The high-coloured pieces and the variations are organically as closely connected as the former sound-pieces and suites with the classical sonatas, or the barbarous *potpourris* and *divertissements* with the fantasias on existing melodies. These facts cast quite another light on the often so disdainfully treated "virtuoso work" than that of the absolute puritanical seriousness and

critical pseudo-wisdom. The "fantasia" has its significance and mission in the history of art, in spite of the oft-raised objection that the thema is no original one—to many an unmistakeable proof of dependent artistic value, and also a speaking witness of creative poverty on the part of the composer, as if, with regard to the latter view, the author, for instance, who extends an individual thought over a subject, must at the same time invent the subject about which he speaks! As if there were not as much merit in finding the point from which new views, explanations, and ideas might be unfolded. It certainly occurs to no one to refuse the palm to a lyric poet who sings of love, because love is not his original theme; to deny to a dramatist the crown of formative fancy because another has invented the intrigue; why, then, should the musician who in composition plays or poetizes tones, be less creatively gifted if he takes a melody, known or unknown, popular or unpopular, but already arranged, and draws it into the depths of his inner soul, or into the light of his spirit, into the life of his temperament, or the play of his fancy, and thence gives it new shades, new light, new life, new garments suitable to it? Only the *how?* that is the question.

As the subject in which the mind of an

author sees something fresh hereby becomes, as it were, a new theme, and as the genius which perceives something new is as creative as the one which invents the theme, so the melody, as soon as varied sounds are elicited from its soul and additional charms developed, becomes a new one; so likewise the fancy of the composer which has worked out something different from the melody is as creative as that which has produced the theme itself.

It testifies a deep misunderstanding of interior intellectual workings and their worth when one taxes a musical composition according to the originality or non-originality of the theme. But it is principally the "opera airs" against which people bear a grudge. For example, variations on a theme from one of Handel's oratorios enjoy much more consideration than a fantasia on a melody from even the most esteemed opera. In the opinion of many, an oratorio under any circumstances is a loftier and more spiritual production than an opera; and yet who would say that "Fidelio" is of less worth than the "Messiah"? The lofty, ethical contents of both these works make them of equal value, though one stands on secular, and the other on sacred ground. It will always come in the last instance to the *what?* and the *how?* Whether the theme of a fantasia be from Handel or

Beethoven, from Rossini or Meyerbeer, fundamentally it will remain the same as regards the artistic worth of the fantasia. One will be more appropriate for the serious, the other for the elegant; this for the dramatic, that for the lyrical; this for the formal, that for the fantastic style of arrangement. What the composer sees and feels in it, how he formulates his conception, *that* raises the composition to the worth of a work of art. In this respect, it is true, the virtuoso epoch has given no very brilliant example in its fantasias on operatic melodies, and has laid the foundation of the discredit which surrounds this form at the present day; but it was neither in the intellectual character of this period of art, nor in its historical position to become such an example. The former—its character—belonged to amusement; the latter—its position—destined it to be an artistic preliminary step in the unfolding of technical means and capabilities for spiritual expression, and was thereby deprived of a higher artistic mission. The fantasia on opera airs was inseparably connected with the intellectual and material existence of the artist; the former dependent on his technical skill, the latter on his birdcatcher's nature, his skill, degenerated to mere sleight of hand, decking the decoy in the most attractive form of popular melodies. His compositions

were means to an end—the personal aim of the virtuoso.

That opera airs played here an important part was to some extent in the nature of things. The audience in the concert-room wished to be entertained, and for the most part music as music, and as a higher form of art, was quite a secondary consideration. Melody was the universal cry, but thereby the melody of the Italian opera was principally meant, for this was the musical sun of the age. The world was at the feet of the opera composer, just as the romance writer carried all before him. It is only too true that the boards as regards music and the romance, as regards literature, are the domains where the laurel crown of popularity is the easiest won by the artist. If the composing virtuoso wished to gain the hearts of the public, right or wrong, he could not afford to bar the road which led to his outward existence, though to ephemeral glory ; so he followed the path which would the most surely secure for him the attention and the sympathies of his hearers. Therefore he took his melodies from the stage, and draped them with high-sounding ornamentalism. If he were a genius—a creative genius—then of course the melodies became winged. A soul rose from their tones, and the form of the fantasias became a

work of art. In the one case, the adaptation of the melodies to higher forms brought for them an enduring worth ; while on the other, the miserable productions, which serve only for the amusement and fashion of the hour, adorning the melody with empty trifles, to flatter the ear of the half-educated, have but an ephemeral existence. And so among the masses of fantasias, *divertissements*, &c., the themes of which are popular opera airs, we find not only musically coloured fashionable pictures, but also, to continue the figure, valuable copper-plates and oil-paintings. Among them are works which, in spite of the partial ban laid on this kind of composition, lay claim to an enduring worth ; such as Beethoven's variations on a waltz of Diabelli, or on a theme from his "Ruins of Athens," which are also to be reckoned in this category.

Puritanical criticism, indeed, has banished this whole category to the *salon*, as not fit for currency in the true domain of art ; yet it is just in the former sphere that the most noble and poetic musical blossoms of our century have unfolded, and have given so much incitement to music in general—not alone to pianoforte music—hence the adverse criticisms have practically but little weight or importance. In *salon* music, all depends on the atmosphere in the background. The tone in the *salon* of the *parvenu* will always

be different from that amongst those gatherings where delicacy of spirit and of form have given the keynote from one generation to another.

Liszt's arrangements of melodies, above all his fantasias on such, though, being connected with the *salon* and the concert-hall, they meet the requirements of the day and of the hour, were not written with that object. Just as the composer Chopin has won for the rhythms of the waltz, and the accents of the mazurka, an inalienable right to a niche in the temple of art, so Liszt's lighter works are the pioneers of more extended form, and more elaborate effect, in the department of pianoforte music. The *salon* which here forms the background, both as regards Liszt and Chopin, comprises the most eminent spirits standing at the apex of society, and of their time.

Liszt's fantasias on opera motives, which in due time were to act so deeply on pianoforte music, had their origin in the second stage of his writings, which belong to the Geneva period, and are for the most part virtuoso pieces. Although they were presaged in former creations, which had adopted a more ornate style of ornamentation than had hitherto been cast away, yet the germs in his first great virtuoso piece—the “Glockchen Fantasia,” after Paganini—were by no means developed, and gave

scarcely any idea of what virtuoso music, especially the fantasias and opera melodies, were to become through his genius. The principle of making ornamentation and floridness an organic part of the piece of music is not only more strongly marked, it is here transferred in the most comprehensive and penetrative sense to the melodious motives and separate parts of the arrangement; and what only floated before Liszt, and what he had only given in outline before his Geneva period, now meets us matured to perfect fruit.

In contrast with the arrangement of melodies only externally got up and unconnected both in spirit and form—nay, for the most part meaningless—as they prevailed during the first three decades of our century, we find in Liszt the conscious struggling after artistic contents, after artistic form, and, finally, after organic unity. He discarded the senseless melodious adornments current during the period in question which surrounded every melody, serious or gay indiscriminately, with motley glitter and insignificant, unmeaning passages; and from each of his compositions shines forth the principle of closely uniting the arrangement of melodious motives with their peculiar individual character, a principle which first found its full application and beauty in the handling of the melody.

During the virtuoso epoch the melody was most frequently varied, but with no other aim than brilliancy—a purely formal and technical work. Liszt also often varied melodies, but began from quite another point of view. The spiritual emptiness of the mere brilliancy and display disgusted him. For him the melody was the fixed expression of a fundamental mood, the type of a character, to be preserved above all things. As, however, a landscape which is also a fixed form may appear under a different or even contrasted colouring, as the sun shines upon it, or the storm passes over it, as the hours of the day or the seasons affect it, and yet the primitive form—the landscape—is not taken away; so for him, one and the same melody placed in the prism of the mind was capable of the most heterogeneous effects, and the richest play of mood. The variation was for him an imprisoned ray from this prism. Melancholy, brilliant, caressing, fantastic, passionate, religious, whatever the colour of the beam was which fell on the melody, it was always life, real life, never *only* form, never *only* empty play.

This spiritual variety of colouring led Liszt here, too, in this domain of fancy, to that often-mentioned richness, not alone of well-sounding and new effects, but of characteristic harmonies and modulations, which can only spring

from the creative source of genius. These felt and seen in the melody became the foundation of his ornamentation and passage work. Now there was no more empty play of sound ; it was, as it were, partly floating on a musical stream of melodious modulations, and partly flowing from it, the spiritual play of colour and mood prevailing at the moment deciding its characteristics. The passage was no longer there on its own account, but as a means of representation. Melody and arrangement were no longer two, but one. Hereby an essential step to the artistic formation and contents of the fantasias on melodies was gained.

In the variations Liszt found at once a favourable soil to fulfil the duties imposed on virtuosos with respect to technical perfection, and to raise them to the highest splendour and greatest *bravura*. He partly melted the variation into that of a fantasia, partly by the variation converted the melody into a distinctive form. This treatment of the variation made it rather a means to an end than, as heretofore considered, the sum and substance of the work itself.

This larger, wider, and freer form was for Liszt the soil which produced a brilliant unfolding of expression and of technicality, whereby he created an essential means for the intensification

of movement and of power, such as scarcely any other musical artist has possessed. It is the mighty *crescendo*, which has already been mentioned when speaking of his impressions, received from the Alpine world, and which is to be found, perhaps, only in one artist, but in a domain opposed to music—Michael Angelo. In the marble statues of this master, the intensification of movement and of strength are carried to a height, of which his biographer, Hermann Grimm, says that “the movement of a figure rises to an explosive violence.” Liszt’s intensifications, each considered as one *crescendo*, do not extend to a certain number of bars, to a passage: nay, rather, an amplification of ideas, they stretch over a whole succession of bars and series of passages, developing themselves somewhat in the same way as the mountains begin in the valleys as hills, and by degrees swell up in height and breadth, and multiplying and grouping themselves ultimately become lofty ridges. In these intensifications—which in Liszt’s fantasias often increase to an indescribably magnificent stream of tones, nay, even to a deluge, and display all the brilliancy and variety of technical means and invention to their fullest height, without separating them from their spiritual contents—lie the elements useful to the virtuoso, aiding at the same time

his new attainments. They not only made the greatest requirements on his technicality, but also supposed a many-sidedness of spirit and a living play of fancy for their execution.

These intensifications having technicality and fancy in the background had another effect on the nature and form of the category of pianoforte pieces here spoken of. However new and captivating their effect, formation, and outflow of feeling, they did not entirely correspond to that lofty artistic idea, which for this kind of gradual exultation and for greater formal dimensions requires movement and counter-movement of the contents. Here also he led the way.

The composing virtuosos of the years previous to 1830 had, in their fantasias, for the most part taken, as a foundation, several melodies from one, or even from different operas. In putting them together, however, their popularity alone appeared to have influenced their selection, and no artistic principle guided their choice. They were not picked out on account of their character, the only thought was to bring favourite melodies into jingling succession. From these inartistic formations Liszt recognized the necessity of the new path, which, as a virtuoso, he had to take in order not in any way to give up the

artist. He seized the idea, so to choose the melodies that, through their contrast, and yet through a certain connection with a dramatic picture, they might be developed into a scene, in which the general character of the opera, whence the motive was taken, should, as it were, float in the background of the fantasia, as the general tone-colouring of feeling, so that a spiritual union between the opera and the pianoforte piece should be palpably felt.

This thought completed the ideal which Liszt obtained from the fantasia on opera melodies. The technical means at the virtuoso's disposal were thus imbued with lofty aims, and the last residue was obliterated which mere empty display, pursuing its own selfish aims, had left as a legacy to mankind, and the spiritual stamp of genuine art was placed upon a hitherto unmeaning and objectless school of music.

With his new idea, Liszt seized the score of secular operas, and took from them the melodies useful for his purpose, over which, with sparkling creative strength, he poured the indescribable charm of his ornamentation, of his new technical means of expression, of the most ingenious, poetical, and spiritual combinations, with an abundance that reminds one of the spring, sounding forth all its living tones as

lavish as they are intoxicating. Thus originated gradually all those great creations for the concert-hall which sought to mingle the highest virtuosoship with the loftiest artistic aim. Thus arose his "Somnambula," his "Robert," his "Don Juan," his "Prophet," and others, including many of his paraphrases, among the number "Rigoletto" and "Ernani," all "virtuoso works," which, nevertheless, will doubtlessly take their place among those pianoforte pieces which inherit the privilege of lasting for generations.

The fantasias and arrangements of melodies which were the predecessors of the above-mentioned creations are, as we have already said, those of his Geneva period, and follow in the order here given—

Grande Fantaisie,¹ Opus 5. No. 1, sur la Cavatine de l'Opéra, "Niobé de Paccini : " "I tuoi frequenti palpiti."

Fantaisie romantique, Opus 5. No. 2, sur deux Mélodies suisses.² *

Ronde fantastique, Opus 5. No. 3, sur un Thème espagnol : "El Contrabandista." 3

¹ The older German editions, 1837, Hofmeister in Leipsic, and 1839, Haslinger in Vienna, bear the title, "Divertissements ;" a later one, 1843, Schlesinger in Berlin, has the above.

² German edition, 1839, Haslinger.

³ German edition, 1837, Hofmeister ; 1839, Haslinger ; 1841, Schuberth and Co.

Grande Fantaisie, Opus 7. Réminiscences des Puritains.¹

Grande Fantaisie, Opus 8. No. 1, sur "La Serenata e l'Orgia" de Rossini.

Deuxième Fantaisie, Opus 8. No. 2, sur "La Pastorelle dell' Alpi e si Marinari" de Rossini.²

Grande Fantaisie brillante, Opus 9. Réminiscences de la Juive.³

Fantaisie dramatique, Opus 13. Réminiscences de "Lucia de Lammermoor."

1. Fantaisie dramatique.⁴

2. Marche et Cavatine.⁵

A peculiar destiny befell this latter fantasia, for, either by chance, or the speculation of some German publishers, it appeared in two parts, each published by a different house; the first half founded on the sextett, "Hah! was lässt den Ruf der Rache," appeared at Hofmeister's, in Leipsic; the other, with the Funeral March and the Cavatina, "Hah! Schon fühl ich mich umschweben von des düstern Todes Graven," at Schott Sons, in Mayence. This division destroys the character the composer has given it, and the designation "dramatic"

¹ German edition, 1837. Les fils de B. Schott.

² German edition of both Fantasias, 1839. Les fils de B. Schott.

³ German edition, 1836, Hofmeister; 1838, Schlesinger.

⁴ German edition, 1840, Hofmeister, Leipzic.

⁵ German edition, Schott Sons, Mayence.

becomes unintelligible. The description here sketched by the composer, and everywhere else so gracefully preserved, appears, in this instance, incomprehensible and inexplicable, until we consider the two parts as a whole.

It is hoped that these remarks will be sufficient to induce the publishers of the "Lucia" Fantasia to restore it to its original form.

Liszt also made his first attempt at waltzes in Geneva, with his "Grande Valse di Bravura," Opus 6, a composition full of grace and poetic charm; and, finally, the concluding work, a very brilliant duet for pianoforte and violin, an electrifying virtuoso composition for the concert-hall, inspired by playing in company with the highly celebrated violinist Charles Phillippe Lafont, "Grand Duo concertant sur la Romance, 'Le Marin de Lafont,' pour piano et violon."

This duet was Liszt's only attempt in that direction. Some later duets of his are transfers from his symphonetic and choral works.

In these compositions Liszt has displayed his strivings in all directions to place the arrangements of melodies on an artistic foundation, and to carry out the principle spoken of. It is clearly seen from the designations of the fantasias how earnestly he sought to win for them variety of character. He arranged and described each

fantasia according to the character of the motive; one is termed "romantic," another "grande," a third, fourth, and fifth, "fantastic," "brilliant," and "dramatic"—a whole succession of specific missions for this category of piano-forte music.

The "Fantaisie romantique" on two Swiss melodies, at that time popular on the Lake of Geneva, one of which expresses yearning, the other home-sickness (*la nostalgie*), to which are opposed the cheerful motives of the "Ranz des Vaches" and of the herdsman's life, is a free picture of Alpine moods. The cheerful motive and the melancholy are the contradictory feelings from which this picture is unfolded. Enchanting pastoral movements, as if mirth should chase away yearning and sorrow, in the end are triumphant. The cheerful motives develop themselves in a rondo-like passage before the finale to a delicious outburst of vivacity and youthful impetuosity. Though the more serious tones sound among the others, they finally yield to this sparkling life. Liszt's Alpine wanderings give the tuneful materials to this fantasia. It imitates the "Ranz des Vaches," plays with the mountain echoes, and seems as though it would draw the sunbeams from the sky.

The Fantaisie, Opus 8, No. 2, is also a Swiss piece, yet has not nature but the *salon* for its

background. As in the case of the "Romantic Fantasia," and the other fantasia belonging to Opus 8, although the transfer of *salon* airs from Rossini forms their leading and essential part, it strives, through the contrast of its motive, after an ideal and artistic foundation. It does not comprise separate detached passages like the variation and fantasia, but aspires to attain a mutual flow, just as the modern opera has enlarged the exclusive forms of air and duet into the dramatic flow of an act. In a word, they are, in domain of the fantasia on opera motives, the application of form to idea, especially to the thought which floated before Liszt of raising the so-called virtuoso composition, in the way mentioned, to a work of art.

The "Lucia" Fantasia, designated by the composer as dramatic, is less broadly worked up than the three last-named compositions. It is rather an ingeniously conceived and brilliant paraphrase of the sextett, "Hah! was lässt den Ruf der Rache," than a dramatic fantasia, to which here also the contrasting melody is wanting; for the dramatic form, above all, requires theme and counter-theme. The "dramatic" here refers to the character of Lucia as the heroine of the opera, and to that of the sextett in general.

Taken as a whole, and referring to former

works of the same kind, this part of the compositions originating during the Geneva period continues the "creative germs," which here partly blossom and partly bear new fruit.

Liszt's "Niobe," his "Juive" and "Puritani" Fantasias, the first two of which he composed in the winter of 1835-36, the latter in the autumn of 1836, are among his most brilliant and effective concert pieces of that time, but which only *he* knew how to execute. Contemporary virtuosos only ventured on their execution after the year 1840. First among these was the youthful Clara Wieck (afterwards Madame Schumann), who was courageous and talented enough to interpret Liszt's concert pieces before the public. Her favourite *morceaux* were, among others, the "Niobe" and "Lucia" Fantasias, and with them she obtained great success.

This part of Liszt's pianoforte compositions also, for the most part, bear dedications—the traces of his many personal connections—

The "Niobe Fantasia," Opus 5, No. 1.

To Madame La Comtesse de Miramont.

The "Fantaisie romantique," Opus 5, No. 2.

To Mademoiselle Boissier.¹

¹ Mlle. Boissier was a Genevese pupil of Liszt's, who became known in wider circles by her later name of Madame de Gasparin, a Protestant religious writer in a noble direction.

In spite of the rich productiveness which Liszt unfolded in Geneva, as his labours were dedicated to the piano and neither to the opera nor to the symphony, the mistrust still remained concerning his higher talent for composition. The theme, "He cannot compose," was reiterated. Only Berlioz, the pioneering genius, recognized the true Divine spark. Only he called out, when he heard Liszt for the first time play the "Juive" Fantasia, "On a aujour-

¹ Madame Mongolfier was also one of his Genevese pupils, who afterwards settled at Lyons as a music-teacher.

² Mlle. H. de Musset, sister to the poet Alfred de Musset, was also one of his pupils.

³ Mlle. C. Kautz, a Genevese, was likewise one of Liszt's pupils. She was a daughter-in-law of Conrad Kreutzer.

⁴ Mr. Peter Wolf was one of Liszt's first pupils in Paris, when the latter was only seventeen years old. He was occupied at Geneva as a teacher at the time Liszt was there. He was afterwards the teacher of Madame Monkhanoff, née Countess Nesselrode, 1874, much talked about in musical circles as a Wagner propagandist.

d'hui le droit de tout attendre de Liszt comme compositeur !"

His friends from all quarters of the world urged him to give a proof of his capability and to apply himself to the orchestra, but he shook his head, and stood firm to the piano.

He felt that here there were still new mines to be opened that only he was called to discover. Without presumption, without vanity, yet full of love and faith, he held fast to this idea. In this mind he wrote, in the autumn of 1837, to A. Pictet through the "*Gazette Musicale*"—

I forget above all that you, as a good and faithful friend, carefully follow the somewhat slow and, till now, somewhat limping gait of my musical labours, that you require an account of my working hours, and that you are astonished—*you* too!—to see me occupying myself exclusively with the pianoforte, and do not find me particularly eager to tread the wider field of dramatic and symphonetic composition.

You can scarcely have an idea what a sensitive point you touch. You do not know that to speak to me of abandoning the piano is as much as to point to a day of mourning, to rob me of the light that has brightened the whole of the first part of my life, and has grown inseparably with me. For, do you see? my piano is for me what his frigate is to the seaman, his horse to the Arab—nay, more; it has been indeed till now my ego, my speech, my life! It is the guardian of all that has moved within me in the hot days of my youth; to it I bequeath all my wishes, my dreams, my joys, and sorrows. Its strings have trembled under my passions, its docile keys have obeyed every caprice!

And can you now wish me to abandon it, to pursue the more splendid and high-sounding success of the theatre or the orchestra? Oh no! Even supposing that I were ripe enough

for that kind of harmony—which you, no doubt, assume too early — even then it is my firm determination only to give up the study and the development of pianoforte playing when I have done everything that can be done—everything that is possible of attainment at the present day.

I am perhaps deceived by the mysterious impulse that binds me to it, but I consider the piano as very important. According to my view, it takes the first place in the hierarchy of instruments ; it is the most frequently used and is the most common. It owes this importance and popularity to the harmonious power which it possesses almost exclusively, and in consequence of which it has the capacity of comprehending and concentrating the whole musical art. In the compass of its seven octaves it encloses a whole orchestra, and the ten human fingers suffice to render the harmonies which are brought forth by the union of hundreds of musicians. Through its means it is possible to diffuse works which, on account of the difficulty of assembling an orchestra, would otherwise remain unknown to the majority. It is, therefore, to the orchestral composition what steel engravings are to painting—it multiplies and diffuses ; and though colour is wanting, it can yet give light and shade.

Its powers of appropriation are enlarged from day to day by the progress already made, and by the persevering labours of the pianist. We make broken chords like the harp, long-drawn tones like the wind-instruments, *staccati* and a thousand kinds of passages, which formerly it only appeared possible to bring forth from this or that instrument. Through probable improvements in the construction of the piano we shall of course once attain that multiplicity of sounds which are wanting till now. The pianos with bass pedal, the polyplectrum, the spinet, and other imperfect attempts are a proof of the generally felt necessity for its extension. The keyboard of the organ, with its capabilities of expression, will show the natural way to the invention of pianos with two or three keyboards, and so complete the peaceful victory.

Although very necessary conditions are still wanting, as, for instance, the different shades of sound, we have yet succeeded in bringing forth satisfactory symphonetic effects of which our forefathers had no notion ; for the arrangements of great instrumental and vocal compositions of former times bear only too

strong a testimony, through their poverty and monotonous emptiness, to the low opinion of the resources of this instrument.

The timid accompaniments, the badly divided vocal parts, the meagre chords, were rather a treason to Mozart's or Beethoven's idea than a translation. If I do not mistake, I gave the first occasion to another proceeding by the scoring of the "Symphonie fantastique." I have endeavoured, as conscientiously as if the rendering of a sacred text were in question, to transfer to the piano not only the musical scaffolding, but also all the separate effects, as well as the manifold harmonies and rhythmical combinations. The difficulty did not alarm me. My love for art redoubled my courage. Although I do not flatter myself that this first attempt has perfectly succeeded, it will, however, have this advantage: that it will point out the way, and in future it will not be allowed to arrange the works of masters in the fashion prevalent up to the present hour. I have given to my work the title of *Pianoforte Partition* to show clearly my intention of following the orchestra step by step, and leaving to them the sole advantage of the effect of masses and variety of tone.

What I undertook for Berlioz's Symphony, I now continue with Beethoven's Symphonies. The serious examination of this master's works, an appreciation of the deep sentiment of their almost infinite beauties, combined, on the other hand, with the possession of those resources with which a continual study of the pianoforte has made me acquainted, render me, perhaps, less incapable than many another of overcoming the difficulties of the task.

The four first symphonies of Beethoven are already transferred; the others will shortly follow. Then I will lay these works aside, for it is only necessary that some one should take the first steps conscientiously. In the future others will certainly continue them, as well—nay much better than myself.

The arrangements current until now will then be rendered impossible; one might rather call them Derangements, a designation which would also suit those endless Capriccios and Fantasias with which we are inundated, and which have been botched up, well or ill, from every kind and category of motive. When I consider compositions of this kind, pompously provided with the name of their author, and scarcely possessing any other value than that of the greater or less popularity of the opera,

from which the motive is taken, Pascal's words occur to me : " Certain authors, when they speak of their works, always say, ' My book, my commentary, my history,' &c. They resemble a citizen, who is a landed proprietor, and has always on his tongue, ' on my grounds.' It would be better if they said, ' Our book, our history, our commentary,' considering that there is often much more that is foreign, than what belongs to themselves."

Thus the pianoforte has, on one hand, the capability of appropriation, the capability of receiving into itself the life of all ; on the other hand, it possesses its own life, its own growth, its individual development. It is, to make use of words from antiquity, Microcosmos and Microdeus—a little world and a little god. From the point of view of individual progress, the worth and number of the compositions written for it assure it the precedence. Historical researches would prove that from its origin an unbroken series of distinguished players, as well as eminent composers, have preferred to occupy themselves with it. The pianoforte music of Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, is not the least title to glory of these masters ; they even form an essential part of the inheritance they have bequeathed to us. They also, in their time, were noted pianists, and never ceased to write for their favourite instrument. I might affirm, that in certain of Weber's pianoforte pieces there is as much passion as in the " *Euryanthe*," and " *Freischütz* :" as much knowledge, depth, and poetry in Beethoven's Sonatas as in his Symphonies.

Do not wonder, then, that I, their humble disciple, strive to follow them, though only at a distance ; that my first wish, my greatest ambition, is to bequeath to pianists some useful instructions, the trace of some progress attained, a work that hereafter may give worthy testimony of the labours and studies of my youth.

In conclusion, I must confess to you that I do not feel so very far from the time when they gave me Lafontaine's Fables to learn by heart, and I very well remember the greedy dog who let fall the greasy bone from his muzzle to catch at the shadow. Let me, then, gnaw peaceably at my bone. The hour, perhaps, will come, and only too early, in which I shall lose myself, while pursuing some monstrous, incomprehensible shadow.

XXI.

THE LISZT-THALBERG CONTEST.

Two episodes in Paris, and a letter of Liszt's as epilogue.

(Period of travel with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-1840.)

I. Thalberg in Paris. Enthusiasm in his favour. Feeling against Liszt. Liszt gives two private concerts in Paris. Berlioz on Liszt. Thalbergites and Lisztites. Liszt goes back to Geneva.

I.

AND had this hour not already begun to strike for him? Were not his compositions, his virtuoso ideals already a pursuit of the "incomprehensible?" His virtuosoship, his compositions had drawn new circles, and his Parisian artistic doings included marvels. The virtuoso had not lagged in rear of the composer. In his excursion to Paris, undertaken in the spring of 1836, he had given eminent proof of the integrity of his genius as a pianist, and also of greater repose and ripeness. His second periodic stay in Paris (after he left Geneva, in 1836, till the end of April, 1837), had outvied the first.

We now turn to the occurrences of the concert-hall. A particular circumstance had occasioned Liszt's visit to the city of the Seine in the spring of 1836, contrary to his original intention, and although the musical season was over, he determined to assemble the musical world about him. In the beginning of this year, the Viennese pianist, Sigismund Thalberg, appeared for the first time within the walls of the world's metropolis. After he had played, in January, at a concert of the Conservatoire, and then given several concerts on his own account, his name, till then unknown in Paris, became the rallying word of all the musical circles. His brilliant technicality, the extraordinary repose of his playing, the aristocratic precision of his execution, his full-sounding tones, all carried the public away with an enthusiasm such as at that time only Liszt had awakened. Thalberg's compositions were received with the greatest *furore*, though their pure artistic worth was only ephemeral, but at the time they astonished by certain novelties, and blinded criticism. Peculiarities of effect and technicality were confounded with the worth of the composition. The charm of his playing consisted of harp-like arpeggios which danced round a melody on the upper and lower octaves, while the melody itself con-

tinued calmly in the middle octaves, out-sounding the rest. This style of writing has long since been adopted in general use, but in those days it was deemed a wonder of pianistic art; the luminous point of Thalberg's "Moses Fantasia." The execution of this consists in the now familiar division of labour of the fingers and hands, according to which, while the crossed hands execute the continuous passage, the thumbs, at the moment of the release of the hands, execute the melody alternately, the tones of which, by the greater strength and higher fall of the thumb, develop a fulness of sound which, overpowering the passage, really is the idea of a vocal melody with pianoforte accompaniment. A division of labour of this kind was indeed an important discovery for the technicality of pianoforte playing—a Columbus's egg! The manner, too, of weaving round the melody was then new in the concert-hall; the glory of this invention, however, was disputed as regards Thalberg. Some called it his, others attributed it to the king of harpists, Parish-Alvars. They each contended for it, and the harpist accused the pianist of plagiarism; but how can it be affirmed that, if two men appear before the public with similar ideas, at the same time, and even in the same town, one of them must have borrowed

from the other? Yet such was the case as regards this technical invention. Parish-Alvars pretended to have excelled in it before Thalberg in executing the harp passage of "Moses" at Vienna. One thing is certain—and for the present let that suffice—that Thalberg developed this technical idea on the pianoforte with extraordinary skill and great *bravura*, and produced a profound effect on his contemporaries which contributed not a little to his brilliant success during his concert-tours through Europe; and yet it appears from Dehu's historical researches that it belongs to neither of them, but to the Italian, Giuseppe Francesco Pollini.¹

The enthusiasm of the Parisians for Thalberg was infinite. They called him the first player in the world, the founder and proclaimer of a new era in pianoforte music; and—oh, fickle favour of the multitude!—Liszt, the absent one, who for ten years had been held the first, was forgotten at that moment, or even said to be outdone by Thalberg. The press seconded

¹ Pollini belonged to the Clementi school, and gave a great impulse, particularly to this branch of pianoforte technics, by his instruction book, "Metodo pel Clavicembalo" (Milan, Ricordi), which was at the time approved by the professors of the Milan Musical Conservatoire, and was there introduced unchangeably (*invariabilmente*) as the basis of pianoforte instruction in that institution.

this enthusiasm with all its might. Féti^s particularly, who was at that time director of the Brussels Conservatoire, announced Thalberg, through the Parisian "*Gazette Musicale*," as the genius of a new epoch.

This news was also carried to Geneva, and threw Liszt into great anxiety and excitement. Could all the aims he had set before himself, could the feeling of his artistic mission have deceived him? Was the new phase of art upon which Thalberg had entered the same that floated before him? Had Thalberg's ideals taken the same direction as his own? Did they pursue the same aims? If not, in what were they different? These were the questions which stormed through him. Always inclined to feel without envy, and to acknowledge joyfully every excellent quality in other artists as superior to his own he was also conscious of his own peculiar capabilities, and felt too well that the "secret impulse" within him was no empty illusion.

His excitement impelled him to Paris.

He came unexpectedly; but his sudden arrival was immediately supposed to have reference to Thalberg, and became the subject of universal discussion. The cosmopolitan nobility saw in it only the jealousy and envy of one artist towards another; they took a lively

part for and against, and in a twinkling the musical world was divided into Thalbergites and Lisztites—the Piccinites and Gluckites of the pianoforte.

Liszt was very much disappointed on his arrival. Thalberg, without an idea as to his rival's movements, had started the day before for Vienna. Nevertheless, the aim of his journey was not entirely lost. Eagerly he inquired everywhere of artists and writers about the impression Thalberg's playing had made, and about the style of his performances. He soon recognized that there was no ground for any surmises as to the end and aim of his own struggles : he felt that Thalberg was indeed a rare pianistic phenomenon, but that what was extraordinary in his playing had reference to technical, not to spiritual endeavours, and that a style of playing such as Thalberg's would never reveal the depths of the mind and the multifariousness of the spirit with spontaneous sentiment. He saw clearly that the fickle Parisians, dazzled by the technical novelties of Thalberg's art, captivated by the splendour of his tones and the smoothness of his style, free as it was from all spirit-stirring power and electrifying accent, and thereby bringing no disturbance to the listener's repose, had been blind and partial in their judgment.

The exaggeration of their criticisms challenged his feelings for truth, and without reserve he expressed his opinion of Thalberg to his friends, representing at the same time his own ideas as to the aims and mission of virtuosoship. To make these quite clear, he invited them to a musical evening in Erard's saloon, and the next day a second followed in the same place. He had only given a few invitations, but the news had spread like wildfire, "Liszt is going to play!" That it was to be private did not restrain people's curiosity, and hundreds streamed into the open space scarcely large enough to contain the multitude.

Hector Berlioz gave a report of these two *soirées* at the time, and compressed the essential parts into an essay, inscribed "Liszt," which sought to justify him as a virtuoso and artist, and also to establish the artistic transformations which had been accomplished by him during the last year.¹ He wrote—

LISZT.

Never, perhaps, has this great artist excited the Parisian musical world to such a degree as during these last weeks. By his residence in Geneva he had left the field open to his rivals

¹ This essay, published by the "Gazette musicale de Paris," appears to have been overlooked in collecting the "Yesammelten Schriften Berliozis." They do not contain it, and this gives its introduction here an especial value.

(and God knows how many pianists may lay claim to this title). His unexpected return, however, at the moment when Thalberg's success had almost become an arm against him in the fickle minds of the Parisians, regained him former sympathy most powerfully, and even increased it. He gave no public concert, but I scarcely believe that the audience at the Conservatoire¹ was more considerable than the assemblage of eminent artists and amateurs who pressed to hear him whenever there was any hope of doing so.

Erard's rooms were more than once literally besieged, as was seldom the case, even when a full concert was trumpeted in all the newspapers and announced on enormous placards at all the street corners. And yet nothing more was in question than to hear Liszt quite alone execute his last compositions. There was not even the smallest little Italian cavatina, no pleasant concert of flutes, no comic duet, nothing of all that so much delights certain *dilettanti*; neither were there any of Beethoven's gigantic symphonies, none of Gluck's choruses, no overture by Weber, to attract a certain class of hearers; yet they all came, a musical multitude. Although perhaps only ten or twelve direct invitations had been given, the news of Liszt's presence had spread so quickly, and the curiosity to hear him was so great, that from four to five hundred persons assembled, and Liszt, instead of finding, as he expected, a circle of friends, had to do with the public, among whom were not only the indifferent, but even the hostilely inclined curious. His unheard-of success and the electrifying impression he made on all can only be compared with the surprise which he excited in those who, with the fullest right, may count themselves among his warmest adherents.

For the strange and quite unexpected fact revealed itself quite involuntarily to his hearers: *Liszt's reappearance had become a new appearance*; the Liszt of to-day has left the Liszt of last year, whom we all knew, far behind, notwithstanding the loftiness of his former capability, and he has since taken so extraordinary a flight, has soared up with such rapidity above all hitherto known summits, that one can boldly call to those who have not heard him lately, "You do not know Liszt!"

It would require a skilful pianist to count up and properly

¹ Thalberg's audience—the upper classes.

estimate the different means, the new treatment, the fresh charms with which he has enriched his already effective play. Notwithstanding a lively impression of the same, I, who cannot even play the scale of E sharp with the right hand, declare myself incompetent to analyze technically the causes of this incredible power. What, in respect of technicality, I could distinguish as actually new amongst the infinite masses of tone which originate under Liszt's hand, is confined to accents and *nuances* which have been unanimously declared impossible on the pianoforte, and which until now have been unattainable. To these belong a broad and simple melody, long-sounding and closely united tones ; then, but only in certain cases, bouquets of notes thrown in, but without hardness and without losing their harmonious splendour ; moreover, a succession of melodies in minor thirds ; diatonic runs in the lower and middle parts of the instrument (where, as is well known, the vibrations are more resonant), executed *staccato* with incredible rapidity, so that each note gave only a short, smothered tone and then expired, and was entirely separated both from the preceding and following one. Such passages would have a similar effect played on an excellent counter bass, with the back of the bow, only the bow should be impelled by steam power, for I can scarcely believe that any human arm, even if it were a Dragonetti of all Dragonettis,¹ would be capable of producing them with such rapidity as did Liszt. It is impossible to describe either the brilliance of his runs or the splendid delineations of his accompaniments —of all these things one can scarcely speak ; moreover, those who are the least favourably inclined towards Liszt have long ago declared that he is capable of anything.

The progress which excited the greatest admiration, and which, on account of his youth and nervous temperament, was the least to be expected, was the wonderful reform in the lyrical part of his execution. He had hitherto been obliged to undergo many a sharp criticism on account of the frequently exaggerated *nuances* in this part of his execution, by which it was rendered too agitated, as also on account of the frequent change of time, and abundant ornamentation which almost arbitrarily overloaded

¹ Dragonetti was a counter-bassist, who had attained a fabulous skill on his instrument.

compositions requiring simplicity and repose. Although the whole style of this criticism might have been different, it served at least to draw the artist's attention to this important point, and to make him ask himself, "Ought the poet-artist, during the creation of his work, to allow himself to be carried away by the glow of inspiration ; to tremble under the passionate emotions he has to excite ? Or would he not do better to shut them up in the depth of his heart, to tame and rule them, to float above them, like Æolus above the winds ? And meanwhile he would be always free to give them full course, and to let them rage momentarily till genius pronounced his *Quos Ego*, again seized the reigns, and calmed the storm he had conjured up."

Liszt's healthy mind could not hesitate a moment between such alternatives. Whether to be master or slave, impelling power or impelled material, head or machine, whether to stand half-way up the mountain in the midst of mist and tempest, and consequently in the darkness, or to climb the summit, and, surrounded by the pure, clear atmosphere, to see how the rain streams at our feet, and observe how the thunderbolts draw their furrows through the clouds—hereupon one cannot be undecided. Nor need one fear in such a case to be counted among those cold and powerless natures whose position remains unchanged because they cannot act. Such a misapprehension were impossible ; for true sentiment betrays itself in everything, and the Divine soul is recognized in all its movements, like Venus, by her gait. It is easy for the phlegmatic to retain their *sang froid*; but if they try to give a proof of warmth and energy, in spite of the most violent efforts, they will only make themselves ridiculous, because they have never possessed either, while a glowing soul, unveiled only for a moment, scorches everything by the smallest flash.

There are decided artists who never feel, who are never carried away by their art, and therefore are never confused in exercising it, not even by interior emotion. For them art is a profession, a guild, a handicraft. Such usurp the name of artist, which they have never deserved, which they never will deserve. Neither can they act as critics, for to be able to criticise, one must understand ; to be able to understand, one must feel. They are practicians, mechanicians, theoreticians, more or less excellent, often very useful beings, but also often the scourge of art.

There are, moreover, artists with quite opposite qualities, those who, tormented by their imagination, are almost crushed down, nay—oftentimes even utterly prostrated by it. They are artists, it is true, but as yet immature. If they live, they for the most part reach the pinnacle of power and insight, supposing that they do not belong to those limited intelligences which, misled by vanity, remain till the end in the perversity and follies of their first youth ; but it is rare that real sentiment is not coupled with sound sense, and if not a large, at least a clear intelligence.

Finally, there are artists who, grown to manhood, endowed with fancy, power, and feeling, are always masters of these costly qualities ; using them only consciously in the midst of the most violent excitement of passion, they still preserve enough presence of mind not to transgress the proper limits. Such alone is the perfect artist, the first-born of Art ; her friend, equal in birth, and almost her father, around whom the younger brethren, the spoiled children of Art, group, themselves, whom the more or less devoted servants follow.

Franz Listz has just entered this solemn epoch of artist-life. The compositions which we have lately heard from him, as well as the progress towards moderation in the exercise of his art, confirm this statement. In many passages of his new works it is not difficult to recognize the thought as the decisive element, the effect of which is independent of the glitter of execution. I mention here, among others, the introduction to the fantasia on the Puritans, where a passage, separated into two measures, is treated with admirable art ; without ornament, without runs, without the help of any of those numerous means which musical pyrotechnics place at his disposal. The fantasia on themes from the Juive yields in nothing to the other. That is the great new school of pianoforte playing. From to-day all may be expected from Liszt as a composer. But one scarcely knows where he will stop as a pianist, for the rapid and entire transformation which we have just pointed out speaks of a nature still in its development, which obeys a mighty inner impulse, the bearing of which is incalculable.

I appeal, in support of my views, to the judgment of all those who have heard him play the great sonnet of Beethoven (Opus

106), that lofty poem which until now has been the Sphinx's enigma of almost every pianist. Liszt, another *Oedipus*, has solved it in a manner that, if the composer could have heard it in his grave, a thrill of joy and pride would have come over him. Not a note was left out, not one added (I followed, score in hand), no inflexion was effaced, no change of time permitted which had not been given, no thought weakened, nothing of its true meaning altered. The *Adagio*, particularly that hymn standing alone, which Beethoven's genius, floating lonely in infinitude, has sung as it were to himself, Liszt has throughout kept to the height of its author's thought.

I know it well ; that is all one can say, but one must say it because it is true. It is the ideal of the execution of a work which has passed for inexecutable. Liszt, in thus making comprehensible a work not yet comprehended, has proved that he is the pianist of the future. To him be honour.—HECTOR BERLIOZ.

In this essay Berlioz had explained the transformations that Liszt had perfected as a virtuoso and a composer. In addition to this, too, though not openly expressed, the contest which had begun in the musical circles about Liszt and Thalberg perpetually peeps through ; and without entering into polemics, Berlioz in this essay had taken part with Romanticism, in opposition to the Thalberg essays of Fétis, which had appeared some months before, and to which the Conservative party was the background. Berlioz's concluding words had given expression to the conviction of the artists of Romanticism. They all agreed in Berlioz's exclamation, "Liszt is the pianist of the future ;" but at the same time he had thrown down the gaunt-

let to the Conservative opponents who believed Liszt to be outdone by Thalberg. No one at that moment took it up. For Liszt had just given such proofs of his genius that his opponents were put to silence. Besides, his "great rival," as they called Thalberg, was not present to provoke another call to arms ; but when, a year later, the latter was again giving concerts in Paris, and Liszt at the same time appeared in public as a pianist, the *for* and *against* began again, and the gage found its knight.

When Berlioz's essay appeared Liszt had already long ago returned to Switzerland, and no one imagined that anything farther would attach to the enthusiasm and different party opinions, or that all this was but the prelude to what was to follow.

II.

Liszt again in Paris. Berlioz-Liszt concert. Liszt's Beethoven *soirées*. As an improvisatore. Heine's remarks about him. Liszt's criticism of Thalberg's compositions and polemic against Fétis. Thalberg comes and gives concerts. Liszt in the Opera House. Both play in a concert at the Princess Belgiojoso's. "Reconciliation." Composition of "Hexameron."

When Liszt came a second time from Geneva to Paris (December, 1836), it was no Thalberg curiosity that brought him hither. Berlioz had fixed his second great concert of the season for

December 18th, and Liszt had promised his participation. That was the cause of his coming.

This was the first time that Liszt had appeared in public for a year and a half—the first time since the *grand éclat*, which had outlawed him. The sensation was monstrous. The greater part of the *grand monde*, for the sake of *bon ton*, had not yet forgiven him, and besides, they had turned their favour towards the Austrian pianist the winter before. They were still full of indignation against Liszt, but attended the concert. Liszt's musical opponents, the Conservatives, were not less alarmed than this part of his audience at his return ; and finally, there were a host of enemies he had made by his scourging of art parasites in the essays, “*De la Situation des Artistes*,” but they also appeared.

When, that evening, Liszt mounted the platform, he met, for the most part, cold and hostile glances ; and the same public who had formerly almost suffocated their favourite with caresses, received him now without a greeting. Head pressed to head ; they looked anxiously at the virtuoso, but no hand was raised to welcome. A painful silence reigned.

The pieces announced for him were his “*Fantaisie symphonique*,” with orchestra, on

themes by Berlioz; his "Divertissement on a Cavatina of Paccini (Niobe fantasia), and fragments;" "Le Bal" and "Marche au Supplice;" his pianoforte score of the "Symphonie fantastique." At first his audience appeared cold; their marks of applause were literally forced from them; but with the second number the victory turned in his favour. He had been obliged to gain every inch (as the musical journals of the day relate¹) by his indomitable talent, till at last a threefold, endless applause recognized his full triumph. The audience yielded to his spiritual might—he remained the victor and master.

This one public appearance was not all. He was drawn into the musical vortex and remained the whole season, though he had only intended to assist at Berlioz's concert. He played a great many times in public during the winter. In particular, four chamber-music *soirées*, which he gave January 18th and February 4th, 11th, and 18th, in concert with his friend Urhan, Beethoven's worshipper, and the violoncellist Batta, much esteemed by his contemporaries, were important for Parisian concert-life. Their aim was to introduce

¹ "Cäcilie, Vol. xix., 1837. Paris, January. "Gazette musicale de Paris," 1837, No. 52: Concert de MM. Berlioz et Liszt.

Beethoven's chamber-music. What the Conservatoire concerts under Habenek's leadership had been for his symphonies, these *soirées* of Liszt were for his trios, and pianoforte and violin sonatas. Like those concerts, they form an historical moment in the art annals of Paris.

All these *ensembles* were arranged with the greatest care ; and the exactitude and unwearying affection with which Liszt sought to do justice to their spirit caused a sort of sensation in the musical circles. It had been so much the custom in public playing to lay the emphasis on technical and formal smoothness, that the idea of a study of the spirit appeared new.

We had (wrote a reporter of the "Parisian Musical Journal" of that time¹) the good fortune to be present at nearly all the rehearsals of these concerts, which presented a spectacle as interesting as it was remarkable. What conscientious and patient study ! With what devotion each individual engaged in the work ! One interrupted and corrected the other, mutually advising and instructing. Without vanity, without seeking to make himself important, each one was content to subordinate himself to the work of art. We heard Liszt repeat the same passage five times, though it offered no technical difficulty, only the expression did not satisfy him ; and we here learnt how certain degrees of shadowing, the more or less prominent accent on a tone, can throw new rays of spiritual light on whole parts of a piece of music."

Liszt also appeared at these concerts as a solo-player. He played compositions of Weber,

¹ "Gazette musicale de Paris," 1837, p. 81. "Les concerts de MM. Liszt, Batta, and Urhan," by L. Legouve."

Chopin, Moscheles, and some of his own, "throwing the mind into a state of distress and blessedness" at the same time, as Heine has it.

As an interpreter of other masters, so also as an *improvisatore*. The "strangest harmonies," the "astonishing modulations," the "unexpected transitions," for which he had been famous as a boy, were now not only signs of originality, they were the full expression of an inventive spirit moved in its creative depths, and which, extending itself on all sides, gave itself up to its glowing fancies and inspirations.

As a pianist, so also as an *improvisatore*, he stood above his contemporaries in art; and the latter were not few, for every one who wished to pass for a *virtuoso* improvised. This was still a universal custom which had descended from the *virtuoso* epoch to recent times. But we must not picture to ourselves any Greek *rhapsodist* at the piano among these *improvisatori*. In modern dress-coat instead of the flowing antique garment, not with the lyre in their hands, but sitting at the piano, without preparation in silent solitude, which to the Greeks was indispensable, the musical *rhapsody* of the nineteenth century appears a very modern production compared with that. Here they had no desire to hear, as once in Attica, inspired descriptions and praises of national

heroes, to be themselves thereby inspired to lofty deeds. The modern public in the concert-hall wished to admire in such improvisatori the rapidity of execution. Here there was no need, as there, of genuine artistic inspiration ; mechanical show prevailed, technical sleight of hand. The public gave a theme, a *chanson*, a popular operatic air, and the virtuoso hung the themes with cheaply constructed runs, trills, and such like ornament, transposed it into a kindred key, ventured perhaps a modulatory *sortie* into the domain of flats, and finally concluded, giving a certain rounding to the whole with a fixed form of cadence, and that was called a "free fantasia." It was believed at the time that the genius of the virtuoso could be measured by it, and so it became in a certain degree his guild charter and passport.

Having only the amusement of the hour in view, they entirely overlooked that the "free fantasia" presupposed a talent, a command of technical means and forms, a *sang-froid* in the midst of the most burning inspiration which only a complete artistic nature can possess, but not an army of virtuosos. They did not think of those few to whom the word inspiration is no empty sound, who possessed an abundant command of every means, and whose being, filled and saturated, as it were, with that indefinable

something from which art is woven, only required the smallest impulse to discharge the electric spark in an artistic form—a Sebastian Bach at his organ, a Beethoven at his piano. The improvising virtuoso of the concert-halls distinguished himself, but only in a way such as befell the unhappy, but at that period famous, improvisatore Himmel, who took it into his head to compete with Beethoven in Vienna; and who, sure of victory, with the view of imposing on the latter, displayed before him a whole array of melodious forms of musical speech, brisk runs, and smooth, brilliant arpeggios; till at last Beethoven, in good faith, thinking all to be only a prelude, called to him impatiently, “Come now; why don’t you begin?” Himmel, however, had already finished.

As was Beethoven compared with Himmel so was Liszt amongst his contemporaries—inspiration beside mechanical performance. His gift had developed itself to a might and power of soul which penetrated and electrified both the individual and the masses. For him the “free fantasia” was no act of calm and cool reflection, it was mostly a moment of deep inward emotion, during which, in spite of the excitement, he maintained his presence of mind—often, indeed, at the expense of physical

strength. Such moments of lofty creative inspiration were not seldom followed by the utmost exhaustion. Heinrich Heine sketches for us a picture of Liszt improvising, in a letter addressed in 1837 to August Lewald.¹ Like George Sand, he describes at the same time the impressions received from Liszt's imagination, which in their mystical religious direction rising to the visionary are allied to those of the authoress.

He writes—

When he sits at the piano and has stroked down his hair several times on his forehead and begun to improvise, then he storms, not seldom too madly, over the ivory keys, and a wilderness of heavenly thoughts sound forth, between which here and there the sweetest flowers shed their odours, so that one is thrown into a state of mingled distress and blessedness.

I confess it to you, however much I like Liszt, his music does not affect me pleasantly ; so much the less, that I am a Sunday child and see spectres where other people only hear them ; for, as you know, at every tone which the hand strikes out from the piano, the corresponding figure of sound rises to my mind—in short, the music becomes visible to my mental eye. My reason trembles in my head at the recollection of the concert at which I last heard Liszt play, I cannot recall what, but I could swear that he varied some themes out of the Apocalypse. At first I could not quite clearly see the four mystical beasts : I only heard their voices, especially the roaring of the lion, and the croaking of the eagle. I saw the ox with the book in his hand quite clearly. The part he played best was the valley of Jehoshaphat. There were lists as at a tournament, and the resuscitated nations, pale as death and trembling, pressed as spectators around the enormous space.

¹ "Salon," vol. iv.

First Satan galloped into the arena in black harness, on a milk-white charger. Death rode slowly behind him on his pale horse. At last Christ appeared, in golden armour, on a black steed, and with His holy lance first threw Satan to the earth, and after him Death, and the spectators shouted.

Liszt had given a fresh proof of his genius to the Parisians in the Berlioz-Liszt concerts and in his Beethoven *soirées*. Nevertheless a tempest was gathering over his head, to the discharge of which he unhappily lent a hand, and which, when it fell, spread through the musical world. An unfavourable judgment was formed, which followed him for years.

This tempest was his so-called rivalship with Thalberg. It had begun the previous spring during his visit to Paris. When now Liszt's triumph seemed complete, his opponents were more and more embittered against him, and their praises of the "unequalled" pianist and composer Thalberg became louder and more violent. Liszt hearing again and again the most wonderful things about him, endeavoured, through a study of his compositions, which were to found a new era in pianoforte music, to arrive at a proper estimate of the artist. He scanned them carefully, and searched them through in all directions, but could find no foundation for these affirmations, and this he also openly expressed to his friends. Much in Thalberg's compositions betokened an extraordinary pianoforte

player, but he could discover nothing which justified his being greeted as an historical pioneer of pianoforte music. Excited by the contradiction of his opponents, irritated and goaded by the blind asseverations of the Thalbergites, wounded also in his own ideals, he had recourse to the very worst means—that of writing a criticism of Thalberg's compositions to prove their want of real artistic worth. He did not reflect that he hereby, in a manner, took part against himself, and gave himself the appearance of wishing to depreciate an artist whom public opinion had placed on a level with himself. What he only intended for the cause, the public referred to the person. Scarcely had his essay, "Revue critique, M. Thalberg, Grande Fantaisie, Œuvre 22, 1^{er} et 2^e Caprices, Œuvres 15 et 19," appeared in the second January number, 1837, of the "Gazette Musicale," than public opinion broke the staff over him. His assurances to his friends that no personal motives had guided his judgment, did no good; all over Paris they spoke of his artistic envy, and of—his secret fear of Thalberg.

Even Schlesinger had published the essay unwillingly, and considered himself obliged to tender an excuse to his readers for having received it into the musical journal—so great at that time was the current against Liszt, and the

universal blindness in the judgments on both ! Schlesinger's accompanying note ran thus : " Nous insérons textuellement l'article de M. Liszt, en gardant toutefois nos réserves dans cette discussion, où l'opinion de notre collaborateur diffère si notablement de celle que la 'Gazette Musicale' a émise jusqu'ici sur le compte de M. Thalberg."

The party struggle now began on all sides and reached its climax mainly through Thalberg's appearance in Paris, in February, but in part through an essay against Liszt from the pen of the Brussels musical *savant* Fétis, who considered his judgment of the year before, given in the Parisian musical journal, attacked by Liszt's criticism of Thalberg's compositions.

This essay is the crown of the "Liszt-Thalberg contest." After an elucidation of the historical phases of pianoforte playing, Fétis speaks of Liszt, then of Thalberg ; then touching on incidental things as well as on personal matters, he concludes his criticism with the following words, placed in the mouth of one of Liszt's supposed friends, though most pointedly levelled against the artist himself.

You thought to bring forward something new, strong, decided, against an artist who disturbs your slumbers ; but you are greatly in error. What you did has been done in all times against those men whom nature and diligence destined to transform their art. Monteverde, Gluck, Rossini, were thus attacked.

What has remained of it? What else than the glory of the artist, and the ridicule of the polemic? You treat Thalberg's music with contempt, and yet executed by himself it delighted—not, perchance, the ignorant and simple, as you wish to make believe, but an assembly of enlightened and impartial artists. Should you not conclude from this that you want the sense to comprehend this music, the understanding for these new thoughts which cannot be fully impressed on paper? So it is indeed; and here friendship lays on me the duty of speaking sincerely with you. You are a great artist, your talent is enormous, your skill in overcoming difficulties, incomparable. You have carried out the system which you received from others as far as possible; but there you stick fast, and have only modified it in particulars. No new thought has given to the wonders of your execution a creative and peculiar character. We will not say that a happy idea may not one day shine into your mind, and your rare gifts bring forth a new thought, but until now it is not so. You are the offspring of a school which ends and has nothing more to do; you are not the man of a new school. Thalberg is that man. That is the whole difference between you.

“You are the offspring of a school which ends and has nothing more to do.” That was the reply to Berlioz's former exclamation, “Liszt is the pianist of the future!” Fétis was the knight who took up the gauntlet Berlioz had cast down. He had no foreboding that his dictum would place him among that very class who sin against men, whom nature and industry destine for the transformation of their art.

Fétis' words have become a historical pendant to the exclamation formerly addressed to the worshippers of Mozart, by Schaul, the

Stuttgart court musician and apostle of Salieri. "Tell me, gentlemen, has your venerated Mozart written a 'Grotte des Trophonius,' an 'Agur,' a 'Palmira,' such as Salieri, this musical sage, has produced? Oh, what a difference between *my* Salieri and *your* Mozart!"

The paper war was not finished, however, by Fétis' strong sentence. Liszt was deeply wounded, especially by the mean motive which Fétis attributed to his actions, having openly declared artistic envy to be the mainspring of his dislike; he therefore proceeded to draw up a retort, for which his opponent's article gave sufficient grounds. He could twist whole sentences together to make a scourge which cut deep into the "musical *savant*," and through all his scathing criticism there flashed his indignation at Fétis' manner of criticising, the way in which so many sages meddle with artistic affairs without possessing the necessary information. This point forms the conclusion of his "To Professor Fétis." He speaks with energy of the necessity of a criticism exercised by the artist himself.

After all (so Liszt concludes his remarks) this resembles the title of Shakespeare's comedy, "Much Ado about Nothing." The real question, the only one relative to this affair, is nothing more than an addition to the topic of—criticism by the artist; in other words, the treatment by artists of questions concerning their own department. I defer a more detailed treatment

of this theme to a more favourable moment. Now it might lead too far, and occasion another polemic ; for, no doubt, if artists on one hand declare the criticism of incompetent men, standing without the pale of theory and practice, as powerless ; on the other hand, the criticism of the competent, in the eyes of certain people, has never any other lever than envy ! But, I repeat, *qu'importe !*

Whatever one may say, whatever one may do, ideas struggle on unceasingly to their right standing point. Things form and rectify themselves unremittingly, and Truth will not fail those who have believed in her, and have suffered defeat for her."

The week after the appearance of Liszt's reply, the Parisian "Gazette Musicale" published a public letter from Professor Fétis, addressed to the editor, Schlesinger, in which he examined the intention of his essay and endeavoured to weaken the consequences drawn by Liszt concerning the *savants* by general expressions, and principally by excusing Liszt's "unmotived attacks" as due to his violent and nervous temperament, and thus, in some measure, concealed his own defeat under the sage's cloak. He estimated his opponent far too highly as an artist, he continued, to wish to continue the polemic ; time, moreover, would show which had been right and which wrong.

While he thus arranged the matter, a kind of finale was given to this unrefreshing yet interesting debate. There came no further answer from Liszt, but the following letter to George Sand again mentioned the dispute, and

showed how deeply he had been affected by it. Time has now proved which judgment respecting Thalberg and his compositions was the right one.

Meanwhile, in the middle of February, shortly after Liszt's review of Thalberg's compositions had appeared, Thalberg himself arrived in Paris—to the great delight of Liszt's adversaries. From that moment there was no other watchword for this Parisian musical season than "Liszt!—Thalberg!"

Whether Thalberg's friends had related to him Liszt's "envy and jealousy," and he, like them, saw an artistic challenge in his criticism, which his honour as an artist required him to accept; whether it was by chance—so it was, that Thalberg announced his first concert, a *matinée*, for the twelfth of March—the same day that Liszt had already fixed and announced for a *soirée*. Hereby, according to general opinion, he was the assailant. Liszt, however, who felt himself neither the rival nor the adversary of the eminent pianist, retired from this apparent challenge by postponing his concert for a week.

Thalberg gave his concert in the hall of the Conservatoire, a narrow space scarcely able to contain an audience of four hundred persons. He played a fantasia on "God save the King," his Opus 22, and his "Moses Fantasia."

Liszt, with proud audacity, gave his concert the Sunday after, in the opera house, a space so large that the mightiest accents of the human voice are scarcely able to fill it. He played only twice : his "Niobe Fantasia" and Weber's "Concert-piece."

When the curtain rose (relates a reporter of this concert),¹ and we saw this slender young man appear, so pale and so thin, paler and thinner through the distance and the lights, alone with his piano on this immense stage, . . . a kind of fear came over us ; our whole sympathy was with this madness, for only madness can bring forth great things. The whole audience shared this uneasiness, and each one listened for the first tones with anxious ear. After the opening bar the victory was half won, the piano-forte vibrated under Liszt's fingers like the voice of Lablache.

The applause which Liszt reaped was stormy and enthusiastic. Thalberg had also received the same at his concert, but Liszt's was extended to a larger circle, and was therefore of wider bearing. Thalberg had for his audience the classically educated public of the Conservatoire concerts, Liszt the mixed public of the great opera. According to the reports of the day, and to judge from the noise that the employment of the magnificent space of the opera house for his concert had made, it was the first time that a pianist had conceived the bold idea of trying to penetrate it with the, at that time, by no means strongly developed tones of the

¹ "Gazette musicale de Paris, 1837," No. 13.

pianoforte. And the venture did not prove a youthful over-estimation of his own strength, but an expression of the consciousness of certain victory! Under Liszt's hands the tones swelled and penetrated mightily through the space. With a power that only the demon of inspiration can lend, he drew the minds of his hearers from their anxious suspense into the vortex of his own enthusiasm. The storm of applause which followed testified to his power to kindle the masses.

The universal excitement and party passion had only become more violent through these concerts of the two great pianists. The extraordinary success which attended both, left the public undecided which of them was really the "victor." Fétis' article had not yet appeared. The decision of the question—in that they were unanimous—was rendered more difficult, as they could not hear them the same evening at the same concert; how could they make a comparison? Then suddenly the surprising and agreeable news was spread that the Italian Princess Belgiojoso was arranging a concert in her *salon* for the benefit of the Italian refugees, in which Liszt and Thalberg would take part and would execute, one his "Niobe," the other his "Moses Fantasia."

The princess could never have hit upon an

arrangement more favourable to her plans. All those who thought they had a right, through rank and wealth, to be present at the concert, hastened to lay down their forty francs—that was the price of a ticket—on the altar of beneficence.

A brilliant society was assembled on the 31st March in the princess's *salon*; the *élite* of the Parisian virtuosos also assisted in carrying out the programme. Besides Liszt and Thalberg, there were Massart, Urhan, Lee, Dorus, Brod, Pierret, Matthieu, Géraldy, and the female artists, Taccani and Louise Puget;¹ but though the merits of these artists were fully recognized, at that moment they were, in the eyes of those present, mere stage supernumeraries, Thalberg and Liszt being the heroes.

At last came the pieces of these two in succession. Liszt played first, then Thalberg. Each was greeted with exultation, each was overwhelmed with applause.

To which did the preference belong? Even now they were not unanimous, though the words of a *spirituelle* lady went the round, who

¹ "Gazette musicale de Paris," 1837, No. 15. Concert given for the benefit of indigent Italians in the *salons* of the Princess Belgiojoso. According to a report of the Leipsic "Neuen Zeitschrift für Musick," Herz, Chopin, Czerny were among those who took part in it, which, of course, is a confusion with the composers of the "Hexameron," to be mentioned later.

after this concert remarked, "Thalberg est le premier pianist du monde;" and when some one, astonished, answered, "Et Liszt?" exclaimed enthusiastically, "Liszt! Liszt! c'est le seul!" Still the performances of both were so extraordinary, that even now opinions were divided. But the general feeling was calmer, to which the sincere esteem which both artists testified to each other in the princess's *salon* not a little contributed. No trace of envy or jealousy was to be remarked; both—that the audience acknowledged—were too eminent for such littleness.

The public now spoke a great deal of the reconciliation which had taken place. "But," as Liszt expressed himself hereupon, "are they then enemies when one artist refuses to another a merit which the multitude exaggerates? Are they then reconciled if they esteem and respect each other outside the questions of art?"

And so the princess's concert, from which ordinary characters had promised themselves many a piquant after-blossom, had passed off with calmness and dignity, without any *éclat*. When, therefore, the article by Fétis against Liszt arrived from Brussels, the already pacified Parisians must have been disagreeably affected. Liszt's rehabilitation, in their eyes, was already complete. For a part of the reviewers, how-

ever, who were ill-disposed towards him on account of the freedom of his satire in treating of uninitiated pens, it was a welcome opportunity of depreciating him with the public both at home and abroad. The most absurd misrepresentations of the Thalberg affair found their way into the French and German press, and even over the Channel to England. When Thalberg had announced his second and last concert for the 2nd April, before his departure for England, one might have read in many of the German journals, "He is going to England, and Liszt after him!"

But Liszt did not go after him, neither then nor later. The Liszt-Thalberg contest was now concluded through the Italian princess's concert; nevertheless, the difference of judgment on the question, "Which is the greater of the two?" still lasted for years. It was settled in Paris, but not till after 1840.

Liszt remained in Paris till the beginning of May. During this time he took part in several concerts, and gave one himself on the 9th April. He also, at the request of the Princess Belgiojoso, composed an introduction, a variation, and the finale to the collection of variations of several composers published under the title of the "Hexameron;" for the princess had entered into another speculation in favour

of the homeless Italian patriots, in which, as in the Thalberg-Liszt concert, general curiosity was taken into account as the chief factor. As some tens of years previous the Viennese music publisher Diabelli had conceived the idea of a variation, to be composed on a waltz theme of each of the most famous composers of that time, so now the princess endeavoured to bring into the musical market a work, also variations, but on a popular opera theme (a duet from Bellini's "*I Puritani*"), for which six celebrated pianists—hence the title *Hexameron*—had each written a variation at her instigation. These composers were Liszt, Thalberg, Pixis, Herz, Czerny, and Chopin. Unfortunately, as Liszt humorously remarked at the time, there was no grim Beethoven among these composers, who furiously rejected the quackery, but some days after threw a precious manuscript in at the door of the publisher with the exclamation, "Here are three and thirty for one; but now, for God's sake, leave me in peace!"

The Variations "*Hexameron*," which are dedicated to the Princess Belgiojoso, were published at that time in Paris. Liszt often played them in his later concerts, for which intention he had arranged them with orchestral accompaniment. But this arrangement was not printed, although the Haslinger edition

(Vienna, 1839) mentions them. In 1870 an arrangement by Liszt of the "Hexameron," for two pianos, appeared at Leipsic (Schuberth and Co.)

When the end of the concert season approached, Liszt also prepared for his departure, but first he wrote, for the "Gazette Musicale," a letter to George Sand, giving expression to his sentiments and touching the Parisian occurrences by way of epilogue.

The letter runs thus—

III.

LISZT TO GEORGE SAND.

PARIS, 3rd April, 1837.

One day more and I depart, freed at last from the thousand ties which, more properly in imagination than in reality, restrain our childish will ; I remove to the unknown land to which my longings and my hopes have already been so long attached.

Like a bird that has broken the wires of its narrow prison, Fancy raises her weary pinions and takes her flight through the vast space. Happy, a hundred times happy, the wanderer who has not to retrace the steps he has already trodden ! Restlessly hurrying on, he sees things as they are, humanity such as it shows itself. Happy he who knows how to dispense with the warm hand of friendship before it grows icy cold, who does not await the day which changes the passionate glance of the beloved woman into indifference ! Happy, in fine, he who knows how to break connections before they are broken !

On the artist particularly it is incumbent to set up his tent only for the hour, and to settle nowhere permanently. Is he not always a stranger among men ? Whatever he may do, wherever he may go, he feels himself at all times an exile. It is as though he had known a purer sky, a warmer sun, and

better beings. And what can he do to escape from this unbounded grief, this vague sorrow? The musical artist must stride through the throng singing, and, as he hurries past, cast them his thoughts without asking on what soil they fall, whether disparagement suffocate them, or laurels mockingly cover. Great and sad is the destiny of the artist. A holy predestination presses its seal on him at his birth. It is not he who chooses his calling, but his calling chooses him and impels him unceasingly forward. However adverse circumstances may be—should he meet with opposition, no less in the family circle than in the world at large ; be there the sad constraints of misery and of apparently unconquerable hindrances—none the less his will stands firm and unchangeably turned towards the pole ; and for him art is this pole, the sensible rendering of the mysterious, the Divine in man and in nature.

The artist stands alone. If events cast him into the bosom of society, his soul creates for itself an impenetrable solitude in the midst of the inharmonious crowd, to which even the voice of man finds no entrance. All the passions which move men—vanity, ambition, envy, jealousy, nay, love itself—remain outside the magic circle which closes round his inner world. Here, withdrawn as into a sanctuary, he contemplates and adores the ideal which his life seeks to realize. Here Divine, intangible forms appear to him, colours which his eye has never seen in the fairest flowers of spring in all its splendour. He hears the eternal harmonies whose cadence rules the world, and in which all the voices of creation unite for him in a wondrous concert. Then a hot fever seizes him, his blood boils through his veins, and a thousand consuming thoughts, from which the holy labour of art alone can release him, course through his brain. He feels himself the prey of an inexpressible evil ; an unknown power constrains him to reveal, in words, tones, or colours, the ideal that lives within him, and fills him with a thirst after attainment, a torture for possession, such as no human being has ever felt for the object of a real passion. But his finished work, even if the whole world applaud, only half satisfies him. He would perhaps destroy it if a new appearance did not withdraw his glance from what he had created, to cast him anew into those heavenly, sorrowful, ecstasies which make his life a

continual struggle after an unattainable aim, an unceasing strain of all his mental powers, to raise himself to the realization of what he has conceived in favoured hours when eternal beauty has revealed itself without a cloud.

The artist of the present day lives outside the pale of social communion, or the poetic—that is, the religious—element of humanity has vanished from our modern states. What have they who seek to solve the enigma of human happiness by some accorded privileges, by an unlimited extent of industry and selfish well-being—what have they to do with a poet, with an artist? What care they for those who wander through the world *useless* to the state machine, to kindle holy flames, noble feelings, and lofty enthusiasm, and through their deeds to satisfy that inexplicable necessity for beauty and greatness that lies more or less locked up in the inmost depths of every soul? Those fair times are no more, when the blossoming boughs of art extended themselves over all Greece, which became intoxicated with its perfume. Every citizen was then an artist; for all, the lawgiver, the warrior, the philosopher, occupied themselves with the idea of moral, spiritual, and physical beauty. The lofty astonished no one, and great deeds were as common as the great creations which at once represented and inspired them. The powerful and severe art of the middle ages, which built cathedrals and called together the enraptured population with the sound of the organ, was extinguished when faith revived. In the present day that sympathy is destroyed which bound art and society together, lending power and splendour to the one, to the other those deep emotions which give birth to great things.

Social art is *past* and to *come*.

Whom meet we, for the most part, in our days? Sculptors? No, manufacturers of statues. Painters? No, manufacturers of pictures. Musicians? No, manufacturers of music—everywhere handicraftsmen and nowhere *artists*. And herefrom arise cruel tortures for him who is born with the pride and the wild independence of a genuine child of art. He sees himself surrounded by this swarm of manufacturers, who, attentive to the caprices of the crowd and of fancy, devote their services to uneducated wealth and bow themselves to the very earth at its

nod. He must receive them as his brothers, must see how the multitude blend them, surround him and them with the same rough estimation, with the same childish, dull admiration. Let it not be said those are the sorrows of unity and egotism. No, no ; *you* know it, *you* who stand so high that no rivalry can reach you. The bitter tears which fall from our eyes belong to the worship of the true God, whose temple is defiled by idols, for whose sake the simple people abandon the altar of the Madonna, the worship of the living God, to bend the knee before an image of earth and stone.

Perhaps you find me very gloomy to-day ; perhaps, listening to the song of the nightingale, you have watched the transition of a glorious night to splendid day ; perhaps you have slumbered under blossoming syringas, and, dreaming, have seen a beautiful fair-haired angel, to wake and smile on the features of your beloved daughter ; perhaps your fiery Andalusian, craunching the bit under the governing hand, has borne you, in a few seconds, through the space which separates you from your dearest friend ;¹ perhaps—nay, certainly—you have met some unfortunate creature on your way whom you have made to bless Providence. And I—I have lived for six months a life of pitiful contests and fruitless endeavours. I have voluntarily exposed my artist heart to the chafings of social life ; I have borne day by day, hour by hour, the dull torment of that everlasting *misunderstanding* which will still last a long time between the public and the artist.

The musician, in this respect, has certainly got the worst of it. The poet, the painter, or the statuary completes his work in the silence of his atelier, and when it is finished finds libraries to circulate or museums to exhibit it. There is no need of a medium between a work of art and its judges, whilst the composer is compelled to have recourse to an interpreter, who, incapable or indifferent, makes him suffer under the trial of a rendering which, often true to the letter, yet only imperfectly reveals the thought of the work, the genius of the author. Or,

¹ George Sand's neighbour and faithful friend, the travelled naturalist Neraud, whom she describes as a "dry, copper-coloured, badly dressed little man," and whom she calls the Malgarhe.

is the composer at the same time the executant artist, how seldom is he understood, how much oftener it happens that he exposes the inmost emotions of his heart to a cold, mocking public that he must wring his very soul, as it were, to extort applause from the heedless multitude ! Only through great exertions can the bright flame of his enthusiasm cast a pale reflection on those icy brows, or kindle a faint spark in those loveless, unsympathizing hearts.

I have often been told that I, less than any other, have the right to make such complaints, because, since my childhood, *success* has in many ways surpassed my talent and my expectations. Just so ; but the noisy applause has painfully convinced me that it is much more the inexplicable chance of the *mode*, the respect for a great name, and a certain powerful execution, rather than the true feeling for truth and beauty. Of this there are proofs, and more than enough. When yet a child I often amused myself by wilful schoolboy tricks, and my audience never failed to fall into the snare. For instance, I played the same piece now as a composition of Beethoven, now of Czerny, then again as my own. The day on which I introduced it as my own I won the most encouraging applause. "It was not at all bad for my age !" they said ; the day on which I played it as Czerny's they scarcely listened to me ; but if I played it under Beethoven's authority I was sure of the bravos of the whole assembly.

The name of Beethoven recalls to me another circumstance which occurred later, but which only too well confirms my views of the artistic capacity of the musical public. You know that the direction corps of the Conservatoire has undertaken, these latter years, to introduce Beethoven's symphonies to the public. At the present day his fame is universally confirmed ; the most ignorant of the ignorant use his colossal name as a rampart, and powerless envy employs it as a weapon against any contemporary who dares to raise his head. To complete the idea of the Conservatoire, I, this winter (unhappily, from want of time, very imperfectly), devoted some musical entertainments almost exclusively to the execution of Beethoven's duets, trios, and quintetts. I was quite certain to be wearisome, but was also quite as fully convinced that no one would dare to say so. And indeed there

followed such brilliant outbursts of enthusiasm that one might have been easily deceived into the belief that the public were subdued by genius, if this illusion had not been entirely destroyed on one of the last evenings by a change in the programme. Without announcing it to the public, a trio of Pixis' was played instead of one of Beethoven's. The bravos were more stormy and numerous than ever ; but when Beethoven's trio took the place originally intended for Pixis' they found it cold, mediocre, and wearisome. Yes, there were people who went away declaring Mr. Pixis' presumption in introducing his work after the *chef d'œuvre* they had just heard as altogether too impertinent.

Be it far from me to affirm that the applause earned by Mr. Pixis was undeserved. But he himself could scarcely receive without a smile of compassion the plaudits of a public who were capable of mistaking two works of such different styles. It is certain that people who can fall into such a misunderstanding must be totally inaccessible to the beauties of his work. "Oh !" exclaimed Goethe—who, according to the general view, enjoyed a glory before all others, who was the happy poet of his century and whom his contemporaries greeted as a king—

O, sprich mir nicht von jener bunten Menge,
 Bei deren Anblick uns der Geist entflieht,
 Verhölle mir das wogende Gedränge,
 Das wieder Willen uns zum Strudel zieht,
 Nein, führe mich zur Stille Himmelsenge,
 Wo nur dem Dichter seine Freude blüht ;
 Wo Lieb' und Freundschaft unsers Herzens Segen
 Mit Götterhand erschaffen und erpflegen.

It is a fact that in the present time a thorough musical education is enjoyed by few. The majority are ignorant of the first elements of music, and nothing is rarer, even amongst the upper classes, than a serious study of our masters. They are satisfied with hearing from time to time and without choice a few good works among a mass of miserable stuff which spoils the taste and accustoms the ear to trivial poverty. Contrary is the case with the poet, who speaks the language of all, and, moreover, addresses himself to men whose minds are formed by classical studies ; while the musician expresses himself in a mysterious speech, the understanding of which presupposes, if

not special study, at least a long familiarity ; and besides, he has this disadvantage, compared with the painter and sculptor, that the latter address themselves in larger measure to the feeling of form, which is much more general than the inner comprehension of nature and love for the boundless which is peculiar to music.

Is there any remedy for this state of things ? I believe so ; and all the more because we are striving for it in all directions. It is continually repeated that we live in an epoch of transition, which is truer of music than of all other things. But without doubt it is sad to be born at a time of thankless working, when the sower does not reap, the gatherer does not enjoy, when he who conceives the thought of deliverance will not see its fulfilment, but must bequeath it weak and naked to posterity, like the mother who dies in the pains of delivery. But what to the believer are the long days of waiting ?

Among the improvements which “ I dream in my dreams ” is one which it would be easy to carry out, and which suddenly occurred to me as I strode silently through the galleries of the Louvre and considered, now the deep poetry of Scheffer’s pencil, now the living splendour of Delacroix’s colours, the pure lines of Flandrin and Lehmann, added to the powerful nature of Delaroche. Why, said I to myself, why does not music invite to these yearly festivals ? Why do the wide halls of the Louvre remain dumb ? Why do not the composers, like their brethren the painters, bring hither the fairest sheaves of their harvest ? Why do not Meyerbeer, Halévy, Berlioz, Onslow, Chopin, and others still less regarded, obey the summons like Scheffer with his Christus, and Delaroche with his St. Cecilia ? They all await the day of their sunrising. Why do they not come here and tender to this sanctified society their symphonies, choruses, and compositions of all kinds, which remain shut up in their portfolios for want of the means of production ?

The theatres—which, moreover, only represent one side of art—are in the hands of administrators who neither have nor could have art alone as their aim. They are compelled to keep success in view, and to avoid being ruined they reject unknown names and serious works. The hall of the Conservatoire holds only a small audience, and its orchestra scarcely suffices for the

execution of great works. Is it not, then, the duty of the government to fill up this gap by appointing a good orchestra and a choir to execute modern works chosen by a special committee? The public, admitted for some months to hear this select music, would form their taste, and young and talented artists would have a prospect of emerging from the darkness and forgetfulness into which they are inevitably thrust by the impassable hindrances which tower up between them and publicity. It would certainly be a magnificent undertaking on the part of the government to encourage musicians as they do painters—an undertaking that deserves as much attention as many a serious debate in the chambers, as many a ministerial struggle. The Convention did not disdain to found the Conservatoire in the midst of the reign of terror.

But I perceive I am doing as timid penitents do, who reserve for the end of the confession what they fear most to say. I have delayed till now to speak to you of the musical dispute which has been too much an object of attention; it has even penetrated to your solitude, and caused you to beg for an explanation. What was at first the simplest thing in the world has become, thanks to misinterpretation, the most unintelligible to the public, and, thanks to misconstruction, the most painful and provoking for myself; so I will relate you the circumstance which some were pleased to call my "rivalship" with Thalberg.

You know that I had not become acquainted with Thalberg last winter when I left Geneva. His fame had scarcely penetrated to us. The echoes of the St. Gotthard and the Fauthorn which seem to have retained the first words of creation, had something else to do than to repeat our poor little ephemeral names. On my arrival in Paris nothing was spoken of in the whole musical world but the wonderful appearance of a pianist, who left all far behind him, who deserved to be called the regenerator of art, and who, both as regards execution and composition, had entered quite new paths, in which we all were to endeavour to follow.

You, who know how willingly I lend my ear to the slightest report, how warmly I sympathize with all progress—*you* will understand what a thrill of hope passed through my soul at the thought of this magnificent impulse given to contemporary

musical art. One thing only made me mistrustful; the eagerness with which the announcers of the new Messiah forgot or rejected all that had gone before.

I confess that I expected little good from M. Thalberg's compositions when I heard people praise them in a way which plainly showed that all that had appeared before him—Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Bertini, Chopin—were, by the mere fact of his appearing, to be sunk in nothingness. At last I became impatient to know these new and deep works, which were to reveal a man of genius. I shut myself in a whole afternoon to study them conscientiously. The result was diametrically opposed to what I had expected. One thing only astonished me—that such mediocre, insignificant compositions should have produced such universal effect. I concluded therefrom that the composer's style of execution must be something extraordinary. I expressed these views in the "*Gazette Musicale*," with no other intention than what I had shown on many other occasions—to give my opinion, good or bad, on the pianoforte compositions I had taken the trouble to examine. On this occasion less than on any other was it my intention to command or to depreciate public opinion. I am far from assuming such an impertinent right; but I thought it my duty to say openly that if this were the new school, I am not of it; if M. Thalberg takes this new direction, I do not feel myself called upon to go the same way; and finally, that I could discover no germ for the future, in his ideas, which it was worth while for others to develop.

What I there said I wrote with compunction, and as it were constrained by the public, who made it their business to place us in opposition, like two racers trying in the arena for the same prize. Perhaps it was the feeling inborn to many natures, which reacts against injustice, and even on small occasions is zealous against error or false belief, that induced me to take my pen and express my opinion openly. Afterwards when I met the composer himself, I said to him what I had already imparted to the public. It gave me joy to be able loudly to praise his talent for execution; and he, better than any one else, understood the loyalty and freedom of my behaviour. Now our "*reconciliation*" was proclaimed, a theme which was soon varied as absurdly and extravagantly as had formerly been our so-called

“enmity ;” in fact, there had been neither enmity nor reconciliation between us. If one artist refuse to another the merits which the multitude have exaggerated, are they therefore enemies ? Are they reconciled if they esteem and respect each other, without reference to questions of art ?

You will understand how much annoyed I was by the endless commentaries on my words and actions. While I wrote those lines on Thalberg I very well saw a part of the indignation I should draw down, the tempest which would gather over my head ; yet I thought—I frankly avow it—that after much that has passed, I should be absolved from the ugly suspicion of envy.

I believed—O holy simplicity ! you will say—that truth could and should always be spoken, and that the artist should never, under any circumstances, not even in the most insignificant things, allow his convictions to be biassed by a prudent calculation of his own interests. Experience has enlightened me, it is true, but not cured the defect on my part. Unhappily, I do not belong to those *natures émollientes* of whom the Marquis de Mirabeau speaks, and I love truth better even than my own self.

Besides, amongst the rude lessons, which were not spared me, I received such gracious and adorable boxes on the ear that I was ready to run after the punishment. Ladies ! boxes on the ear ! what do I say ? Boxes on the ear from the muse, which do so little harm and are so sweet to receive, that one might kneel down and beg for them ; and yet more lessons from the ex-muse of my country ; but they are worthless, and I think no one will envy me them.

But really I am ashamed to have spoken to you so long of these trifles. Let us forget this last clamour of a world where there is no vital air for the artist. Somewhere, far away in a land that I know,¹ there is a clear spring, which lovingly waters the roots of a solitary palm. The palm tree spreads its boughs over the spring and protects it from the burning rays of the sun. From this spring I will drink, under that shade I will rest, the touching emblem of that holy, indestructible love which holds all together on this earth, and doubtlessly blooms in heaven.

F. LISZT.

¹ Referring to a feuilleton of Madame de Girardin.

XXII.

ROHANT.

[Period of Travel with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-1840.]

At George Sand's. Pianoforte transfers of the first four symphonies of Beethoven. Of the "Erlkönig," and other songs by Franz Schubert. Incipient disagreement between the Countess and George Sand.

WHILST Liszt was tasting the misery of an artist's life, and at the same time earning new glory, the Countess d'Agoult lived at Rohant, enjoying the hospitality of George Sand. Liszt had made several excursions thither in the course of the winter. Now that all his artistic engagements were at an end, that he had endeavoured to make himself understood by the public by giving expression to his manner of comprehending art, and had sought to weaken the reproach of mean envy in the Thalberg affair, by representing his motives, he hurried thither again to take some rest before beginning his Italian journey.

It was the first summer that George Sand

had lived in Rohant after an absence of some years, happy again in the possession of her family inheritance. Though Romanticism had also made its entrance into the old ancestral castle with the authoress of "Leone Leoni," and friends, poets, *literati*, actors, and celebrities of all sorts went in and out, yet the months Liszt passed here were amongst the calmest of his life. They were three months, as he himself describes them, with his poetic fancy, "full of rich inner life, the hours of which he had religiously enclosed in his heart."

And indeed it is a charming pastoral that he calls up before us in a letter to Pictet, describing the life in Rohant.

The framework of our day (he writes to him) was simple, and easily filled up. To kill time we needed neither royal *battues*, nor an amateur theatre, nor so-called *fêtes champêtres*, to which everybody brings his own *ennui* to contribute to the general amusement. Our occupations and enjoyments consisted in reading a natural philosopher or a deep-thinking poet—Montaigne or Dante, Hoffmann or Shakespeare; in receiving letters from absent friends; in long walks on the shady banks of the Indre; in a melody inspired by the impressions there received; in the joyous cries of the children, who had found a night-moth with transparent wings, or a poor hedge-sparrow that had peeped too curiously out of its nest. "And is that all?" Yes, all. You know that the delight of the soul is not measured by external appearances.

When the night approached we assembled on the garden terrace. The last sounds of day gradually died in the distance. Nature seemed to take possession of herself, and, rejoicing at the absence of man, to send up to heaven all her tones and all her perfumes. The distant murmur of the Indre reached us,

the nightingale warbled her enchanting song of love, and even the most despised of animals sent up a pure and powerful sound to take part in the universal solemnity. A faint breeze, scarcely felt, brought us alternately the soft odour of the lime tree or the stronger perfume of the larch, and our lamps cast fantastic lines of light on the neighbouring trees.

Yet the terrace was not all dreamland. Many a night through, George Sand, who loved the mysterious stillness of the night, when all had gone to rest, when nature and man seemed only to dream, gave herself up zealously and willingly to her inventive genius, and lived only for this. With paper and ink before her, her pen flew along till the dawn of morning disturbed her in her labours. Liszt was several times her companion. She was then writing her novel in one volume, "Mauprat," and young Liszt, seated opposite to her, looked through Beethoven's scores. One small lamp threw a faint light over the room in which poet and musician in silent spirit-work forgot their slumbers.

Already in Geneva Liszt had conceived the plan of transferring Beethoven's symphonies to the piano, as he had done with Berlioz's "Episode de la Vie d'un Artiste," and had there begun with the "Pastoral" and some others. He now continued his work. The completion of the pianoforte score of the "Pastoral" and of the first, second, and fifth symphonies was the fruit of his nightly studies at Rohant.

He also undertook other smaller labours. His enthusiasm for Franz Schubert's songs induced him to win them also for the piano. The first number of this master's songs transferred by him, among others the "Erlkönig," also belongs to his summer's stay at Berry.

But they not only read, walked, played, dreamed, and worked, there was also enough of laughter and jesting. The family "Piffoël," though no longer in full numbers, as in the tour to Chamounix, still continued to play their afterpiece. Mummeries and improvised comedies were the habitual amusements of the little society. All were obliged to take part in them, both the inhabitants of the house and visitors; and between whiles mad tricks were played, now on one, now on the other. Liszt has related one of these in a most amusing manner in one of his letters,¹ as well as the way in which they got rid of one of those intruders who, without fame themselves, all the more eagerly press around the famous.

Thus passed a part of the summer, poetically varied. All that met the eye without this dwelling was beauty, cheerfulness, and poetry—yet all was not sunshine in Rohant. Dissonances had silently developed themselves between the celebrated French authoress and the

¹ Letter to Adolphe Pictet.

lovely countess pining for laurels, who until then had only been able to acquire one glory—that of being the beloved of a famous virtuoso. It has been often affirmed that George Sand's celebrity had troubled the countess's repose. It is certain that had it not been for George Sand there would have been no "Nélida." At any rate this disturbance began at Rohant. But even without this there was such a contrast between the two natures that any harmonious intimacy between them seems scarcely conceivable. The eminently and creatively gifted George Sand, and the *spirituelle*, but not over-talented, Countess d'Agoult; the one a child of nature, who felt herself most at ease in boots and blouse, and on her fiery Andalusian without a saddle; the other, from head to foot, a *grande dame* of the old French school, who loved to move only in thousand franc dresses; the one all spontaneity, the other all calculation; George Sand all truth in good and in evil, the countess veil upon veil. How could two such women remain harmoniously in contact with each other? The veil provoked George Sand to cynicism, which in turn led the countess to hypocrisy. The child of nature challenged the *grande dame*, and again the sarcasm of the latter drove the former to extremities.

There were many collisions between them, and

Liszt had much ado to keep things smooth, though there was no other foundation for discord than the antipathy occasioned by the opposition of unadorned nature to painted courtliness. Yet when they came to say farewell, they parted clearly understanding one another's inward feelings.

This ill-feeling of the two women towards each other, which at last came to an open breach, was not without effect on Liszt's intimacy with George Sand, which from this time began to grow cold. Although he must have inwardly blamed the countess, yet out of regard for her he kept himself aloof from the authoress when he again visited Paris. And when later this reserve was no longer necessary, he could not persuade himself to renew the intercourse. "I didn't care to expose myself to her *sottise*," as he afterwards expressed it. Moreover, at the bottom of his heart he had felt but little sympathy for her. It was the geniality and the loftiness of her fancy, the boldness of her muse, which had drawn him to her; the "modern Sibyl, who, like the Pythia of old, said so many things of which no other of her sex knew anything, and which no other would have dared to pronounce."¹

Liszt never visited Rohant again.²

¹ Liszt's "Chopin."

² Chopin's irritation against Liszt was caused by these altered feelings towards George Sand. (Book ii. chap. x.)

XXIII.

ON THE LAGO DI COMO.

[Period of Travel with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-1840.]

Lyons. Distress of the workmen. Liszt and Nourrit give a concert on their behalf. Nourrit and the alcove scene in Meyerbeer's "Huguenots." Schubert worship. L. de Rouchaud. Chambéry. To Italy. Milan. In Ricordi's shop. Opera in the Scala. Bellagio. New Compositions. Dante. Fantasia "Études d'execution transcendantes." Chromatic galop; "Huguenots Fantasia."

IT was about the end of July when Liszt and Madame d'Agoult bade farewell to Rohant. The hot season, however, did not allow them to cross the Alps immediately, to tread the promised land of poets and artists. They stayed here and there—in Lyons, in Chambéry, in Geneva. Six weeks lay between their stay in Berry and their entrance on Italian ground.

They remained longest in Lyons; and here, as in Chambéry, there were artistic representations and interesting meetings. In the former place it was Liszt's benevolence which led him

to the platform ; in the latter, a personal connection on the part of the countess, which cast light and shade on the life of the travellers.

In Lyons, just at that time, the working class were again passing through one of those troubled periods, which had already often visited them, accompanied with the severest distress. Liszt had not yet lost sight of the *vivre en travailleur, ou mourir en combattant* of 1834 ; but even without this, or the socialistic ideas allied thereto, it would have required no other incitement than the misery itself to decide him immediately to give a concert in favour of the sufferers. It was in the *salon* of Madame Montgolfier, a pupil of his, already mentioned, that the matter was discussed, and that he arranged a plan for the concert. While they were speaking about it, Adolphe Nourrit unexpectedly stepped into the *salon*. He immediately adopted Liszt's idea.

The concerts of both brought in some thousands of francs for the poor sufferers ; but such sums were but as a drop of water in the sea to meet a misery which did not last for hours, but for weeks and months, that did not fall on individuals alone, but on a whole class of a populous city. Liszt felt this deeply, but it did not deter him from his beneficent endeavours.

I have always considered it my duty (he wrote after these concerts, to his friend Pictet) to lend aid to whatever benevolent plans may fall in my way; but the day after the concert in which I took part, when those who had undertaken it congratulated each other and exulted over the receipts, I withdrew with downcast looks. I considered that in the division scarcely one pound of bread would come to a family, barely a single bundle of wood to warm them. Eighteen hundred years have passed since Christ preached the fraternity of man, and His word is as yet no better understood! It is true it burns like a holy lamp in the hearts of some, but does not shine on all, and this generation, which has soared up to the loftiest heights of knowledge, remains deep sunk in the darkness of insensibility.

So, too, thought Nourrit. His sympathies were also kindled at the flame of Christian brotherhood. He belonged especially to those rare artistic phenomena who seek to unite the practice of art with religious and ethical principles. His soul was filled with a chaste love of his art, and he kept it holy as a religion—not only in idea, but also in practice. Though a stage singer, he would for no price have undertaken a part which offended his ideas of art. It is, for instance, but little known, and very characteristic of Nourrit, that when Meyerbeer had finished his opera "The Huguenots," in which Nourrit had undertaken to sing Raoul, he sent back the manuscript of that part to the composer, because it contained a very frivolous alcove scene between Raoul and Valentine, in which he would not participate. "He would only serve genuine beauty," he said. Meyer-

beer and Scribe hereupon worked up the scene anew, and gave it that heroic stamp it has since retained—the most brilliant portion of all the fourth act.

This little episode behind the scenes of art had come to Liszt's knowledge. He himself, practising art in public, knew too well what it was to maintain a puritanism of artistic feeling even on the boards. Filled with sympathetic admiration for Nourrit's character, he rejoiced to meet him, independently of their mutual concert-giving for the Lyonese workmen. It farther afforded Liszt great delight to be able to make his friend acquainted with Franz Schubert's songs, which at that time enjoyed by no means an extensive fame—there did not even exist a French edition of them. Liszt had played in Madame Montgolfier's room, to the great delight of those who were present, the transfers he had prepared at Rohant. Now Nourrit sang, and Liszt accompanied. It was a Schubert worship of a loftier kind. The Countess d'Agoult also occupied herself in improving the defective French text of the poems. While the two artists executed the "Erlkönig," she sat with paper and pencil in a corner of the *salon* and paraphrased the German words into French. The applause which she won was scarcely less than that of the poet himself.

Liszt loved such recognitions of her talent ; and when he mentioned about this evening in a letter¹ written for the "Gazette Musicale," drawing attention to Schubert's songs, he spoke also of her paraphrase. This was the first literary *début* of the Countess d'Agoult ; the first step, also, in her rivalry with the authoress of *Rohant*. Her name, indeed, is not mentioned in the letter, Liszt having designated her by the letter M, but it was well known in the Parisian world whom was meant.

Among the enthusiasts of this evening was the youthful poet Rouchaud—a fiery blusterer, who had not yet won his poetic spurs. A new star arose for him in the beautiful and *spirituelle* countess, and when Liszt continued his journey towards Italy he accompanied them as far as Chambéry, where he kept them company during their stay. L. de Rouchaud did homage to the countess quite in the style of the Romanticism of the time. But contrary to *elle et lui*, this homage in the course of years became a genuine friendship, offensive and defensive, in which the countess showed a capacity of perseverance and sacrifice beyond all she had evinced in any other connection.² The young

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii., Letter No. 4.

² The "Mes Souvenirs" of the Countess d'Agoult are dedicated to Rouchaud.

poet was also at that time an intimate friend of Liszt. Two letters of the *Bachelier-ès-musique*¹ are reminiscences of this relationship.

The days in Chambéry were followed by a short visit that Liszt made to the statesman with the inborn hate to "the reign of mathematics," the poet Lamartine, whom he surprised in his country house, situated on the Saone, in Maçon. Then followed an excursion to La Grande Chartreuse, the cradle of the Carthusian order, once so difficult of access, in its enclosure of lofty mountains. Another short stay in Geneva, and then with a *vetturino* over the Alps to Milan.

Liszt has described the journey from Chambéry to Milan in his first letter to L. de Rouchaud, a composition full of spiritual *aperçus*, in regard to Lamartine and Chateaubriand, of charming descriptions of nature, and interesting remarks on the cloister and cloister life, called forth by his visit to the Carthusian monastery—remarks impregnated with the ideas of the time, and to which his sympathy with social questions gives the tone. Liszt concludes this letter with the announcement of his arrival in Milan, and a short description of the little events which occurred there in the few days of his stay.

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," Reisebriefe, Nos. 2 and 6.

I have just arrived (he wrote). You think, of course, that I ran immediately to see the cathedral, the museum, the library. Not at all! I am no Valéry, reader. I completely ignore how one must travel with advantage, what one must do in order to admire classically and methodically. I have never learnt anything in "chapters," except, at the most, an express disinclination to the ways of tourists, from whom I keep apart as much as possible, and consequently hasten to forget the time. What could one do better who is a willing exile, who loses his way intentionally, who aims to be imprudent, who is everywhere a stranger, and everywhere at home?

So Liszt sauntered through the streets, until he found himself unexpectedly before Ricordi's shop, and entered. Ricordi was one of the most important musical publishers in Europe, who, according to Liszt's words, are the ruling ministers of the musical republic, the "salus inferorum and refugium peccatorum," the providence of wandering musicians. Without any preamble he seated himself before an open piano and commenced to play—his manner of giving his letter of introduction.

"Quest' è Liszt o il diavolo!" Liszt heard Ricordi, who was present, whisper to one of his clerks. Five minutes had scarcely passed when Ricordi, with eloquent hospitality, had placed at the musician's disposal his villa in the Brianza, his box at the Scala, his equipage, his horses, his fifteen hundred scores—of which splendours, however, Liszt made no use. On account of the heat of the sun, he remained only a few days in

Milan, and postponed a visit to the marvels of the city to another time. His only visit was to the Scala theatre. They were just representing "Marino Falieri" for the first time. And Liszt got an insight into the way in which the Italian Opera was brought on the stage.

In this blessed land (he wrote) putting a serious opera on the stage is not at all a serious thing. A fortnight is generally time enough. The musicians of the orchestra and the singers, who are generally strangers to each other, and get no incitement from the audience (the latter are generally either chatting or sleeping—in the fifth box they either sup or play cards) assemble inattentive, insensible, and troubled with catarrhs, not as artists, but as people who are paid for the music they make. There is nothing more icy than these Italian representations. No trace of *nuances*, in spite of the exaggeration of accent and gesture dictated by Italian taste, much less any effect *d'ensemble*. Each artist thinks only of himself, without troubling his thoughts about his neighbour. Why worry one's self for a public that does not even listen?

Liszt left the theatre with a very unfavourable opinion of the artistic spirit of the most famous theatre in Italy. Yet he had only given his impressions as he had received them—thus he closes his description—he would confirm his judgment after a longer observation. This came half a year later, a stirring essay on the "Scala," to which this short description of his impressions formed a sort of introduction. Our next chapter will treat of it.

The great heat soon drove Liszt from Milan to the neighbouring Lago di Como, where he

hired a villa at Bellagio, which he inhabited with the Countess d'Agoult. He dwelt there till February, 1838; then he remained some time in Milan, whither he had in the meanwhile made many excursions.

His residence in Bellagio was for him a time of happiness; it belonged to those few periods of his *liaison* over which a cloudless sky was spread. No swarm of commonplace artists crowded round them here; there was peace in both hearts. It was for the countess one of those periods in which the voice of nature puts all worldly interests to silence, even in the vainest woman. In that moment it was truth that Liszt wrote to De Rouchaud.¹

If you want a favourable theatre for the story of two happy lovers, choose the shores of the Lake of Como.

Never yet (he wrote further)—never yet has a region appeared to me so superabundantly blessed by heaven, a region where the full charm of a life of love could appear more natural. The splendour and majesty of the Alpine lands only serves to put our littleness to shame. Man feels himself oppressed by such greatness. The ice-covered mountains existing from countless ages warn him of his perishable nature; the untouched purity of the eternal snow is a mute reproach to his soiled conscience. The threatening granite masses above his head, the gloomy green of the firs, the sharp air, the terrors of the thundering avalanche, the unceasing roar of the abyss, are all emblems, sternly warning emblems, of a dark, inevitable destiny. But here under the ethereal blue of a love-breathing sky the breast expands, and all the senses awake to the joy of existence. Gently sloping crests

¹ Letter No. 6.

beckon us to their green summits. The fruitful slopes where the chestnut, the mulberry, and olive tree, the maize, and the vine rise with their promise of plenty, show the traces of busy industry. The freshness of the waters softens the ardour of the burning sun ; the luxurious splendour of the night alternates with the brilliance of the day. Man breathes more freely in the bosom of friendly nature. His harmonious relations with her are not hindered by gigantic circumstances. He may love, he may forget, he may enjoy, for it seems to him as though he only claimed participation in the general happiness.

Yes, my friend, when the ideal form of a woman floats before your dreaming soul, a woman whose heaven-born charms bear no allurement for the senses, but only wing the soul to devotion, and if you see at her side a youth of sincere and faithful heart, weave these forms into a moving story of love, and give it the title, "On the shores of the Lake of Como."

The days were shortened or entirely filled up by excursions in company in the neighbourhood of the enchanting lake. Liszt sketched off many a popular song that they heard in the mouths of the country people on these occasions, and laid it by in his portfolio as a souvenir. One might often have seen him in these rambles in the midst of a troop of village boys, just as in Paris, where, as a lad, he threw small coins among a crowd of *gamins*, and amused himself in watching their struggles. But here it was baskets of figs and cakes that he gave up to be plundered, by which means he soon became their idol.

The two travellers passed a great deal of their time on the lake, the picturesque, sloping shores ever tempting them to new excursions.

During the heat of the day they took refuge under the shade of the plantains that surrounded the Villa Melzi, and read the "Divina Commedia" at the feet of Comelli's statue, "Dante led by Beatrice." On calm nights they were often seen in a gondola, amusing themselves with fishing by torchlight, or simply allowing themselves to be rocked by the moving waters. Liszt was also often found alone, sunk in contemplation of the splendour of the night, and carried away by feelings through which the soul "seems to float up to the eternal sources of the beautiful."

Bellagio and the Lago di Como were woven into his life as a poem, the contents of which were beauty, its rhythms music. At Christmas a little daughter was born to him, and in remembrance of those harmoniously poetic days on the Lake of Como he named her Cosima.

These days of dreaming were not entirely absorbed by poetic feeling. There were moments when his instrument seemed too imperfect an interpreter of his sentiments; yet there originated here some of the most precious blossoms of a poetically characteristic rather than a lyrical kind. In these not only the charms of the surrounding nature, but his reading had also had a part. It was here that originated the commencement of his Italian

Wandering Album, arising from impressions made on him by works of art, in contrast to his Swiss Album, which had been inspired by nature. To the first piece, belonging to his sojourn in Bellagio, and an echo of his readings in Dante, Liszt gave the title of "Fantaisie quasi Sonata, après une Lecture de Dante."¹

This Dante Fantasia—a composition full of strong features, of wide dimensions, and of a mysteriously enchanting and yet powerful colouring—is rather a sketch than a thoroughly worked-out picture. Liszt has made no further mention of the poem of Dante which inspired this music, but it is not difficult to recognize that one of those half-religious, half-worldly moods prevails in it, such as scarcely any other poet than Dante has given, and which appears to have arisen from earthly sorrow and heavenly aspiration, from Divine yearning and mystic ecstasy, yet always retaining an impulsive strength.

Besides the Dante Fantasia the "Vingt-quatre Grandes Études dédiés à Charles Czerny"¹—a work standing alone in pianoforte literature—was among the principal of those originating on the Lake of Como. It appeared

¹ "Années de Pélérinage : Italie," No. 7. Schott's sons in Mainz, 1858.

² Haslinger, Vienna, 1839.

later, as the “seule édition authentique revue par l'auteur,” under the title of “Études d'exécution transcendantes pour le Piano.”¹

No. 1. Preludio (C sharp).	No. 8. Wilde-jagd (E flat).
No. 2. ” (A flat).	No. 9. Ricordanza (A flat major).
No. 3. Paysage (F sharp).	No. 10. ” (F flat).
No. 4. Mazeppa (D flat).	No. 11. Harmonies du soir (D flat major).
No. 5. Feux Follets (G flat).	No. 12. Chasse-Neige (B flat).
No. 6. Vision (G flat).	
No. 7. Eroica (E flat major).	

This edition is likewise dedicated to Czerny, “en témoignage de reconnaissance et de respectueuse amitié de son élève.”

The studies of this collection—twelve in number, not twenty-four, as the former title gives it—are a gigantic work of spirited technicality, the culminating point of all pianistic studies. All is new, both in the invention and the working out, the fulness of tone enchanting, the combinations bold, the technicality unrivalled. Other masterpieces appear mean and pitiful beside them, with which only Chopin's Études and Preludes can be compared as regards musical and poetic worth, but not breadth of foundation, variety of feeling, and technical magnificence. The Études of the older edition bear no inscription; those of the newer are provided with them, whereby the contents appear almost tangible.

Independently of the great musical worth of

¹ Breitkopf and Härtel, 1852.

this work, it is also remarkable in other respects, for no other composition is to be found in the whole of musical literature that gives as this does an insight into the development and the formative power of the composer's fancy. Liszt has taken as the foundation of his "Études d'exécution transcendante" the small Études which he composed in Marseilles as a boy of fifteen, and published as Opus 1. It is as agreeable as it is instructive to compare these two works, and to inquire how the wild, genial step of "Mazeppa," the bold "Eroica," the magnificently gloomy "Vision," the variegated flickering of the "Will o' the Wisp," the poetically dreamy "Harmonies du Soir," could form themselves from the yet undeveloped germs of youthful fancy; how these pieces with their free modern spirit could be evolved from the creations of classical formality.

Two other compositions follow these studies —a galop and a fantasia. The "Grand Galop chromatique" (Opus 12),¹ dedicated to the Hungarian Count Adolphe Apponyi, made the tour of the concert-halls of Europe, in its time, as a piece for technical display, and owed its origin to the above-mentioned studies; for in working them out a striking chromatic run originated under Liszt's fingers, the character of which seeming

¹ Fr. Hofmeister, Leipsic, 1838.

to challenge him, as it were, to compose this galop, he retained it as his motive. Like the "Chromatic Galop," with its electrifying runs, the fantasia "Réminiscences des Huguenots, Grande Fantaisie dramatique" (Opus 11),¹ has also found its way into the concert-hall, where it still maintains its place. It is the only composition Liszt dedicated to the Countess d'Agoult; nor does this bear her name, but only her initial—"dédiée à Madame la Comtesse d'A. . . ." It was also the sole piece written by Liszt that retained its favour in her eyes. When she afterwards spoke depreciatingly of his productions she always excepted the "Huguenots Fantasia," and called it his "best work."

¹ Fr. Hofmeister, Leipsic, 1838.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LISZT AND THE MILANESE.

[Period of Travel with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-1840.]

Concerts in Milan. His three academies. His improvisations. Great enthusiasm of the public. Letter to Massart. Musical *salons*. Rossini. Liszt's Rossini transcriptions. His report of the Scala theatre, and its consequences. Milanese *literati* bring a lawsuit against him. Liszt gives satisfaction. The Milanese resent. Farewell dinner.

LISZT hoped to live retired and unknown during his stay on the Lake of Como—an intention which was defeated by the Milanese Ricordi. Too much a man of business not to understand the advantage the vicinity of the famous artist would bring him when the Milanese *nobili* exchanged their villas for their palaces, and the doors of the Scala and the concert-halls did not stand open in vain, he filled his shop windows with Liszt's compositions, and the Milanese newspapers announced to "fortunate Italy that it lodged the first pianist in the world." Liszt's *incognito* was now at an end. The Milanese,

eager to hear him, hoped for his visit to Milan, and the dwellers on the Lake of Como regarded him with curious glances, especially after that Counts Belgiojoso,¹ who lived in the neighbourhood, had spied out the artist's residence and had surprised him with a serenade on the lake.

Liszt could no longer conceal himself, and soon after Ricordi's announcement he was drawn into the musical life of Milan. Just that winter there were many foreign artists there, a whole contingent from Paris, and he met unexpectedly with his friends Ferdinand Hiller, J. P. Pixis, and others, among them Adolphe Nourrit, who was a musical star in the town. Liszt went several times from Bellagio to Milan, and at last, in the beginning of February, he removed thither and remained till the middle of March.

Each of his excursions had been connected with music. He assisted at concerts. He also gave some on his own account. On the 3rd December he played in a concert given by the pianist Mortier de Fontaine, who some years later gained a great reputation as a specialist in the execution of piano music, but at that time was rowing on the smooth waters of general pianism. Liszt played with him a duet for two pianos by Pixis. He also assisted at a piano-

¹ Cousins of Prince Belgiojoso.

forte *ensemble*, which put the good Milanese into ecstasies. It was the overture to Mozart's "Zauberflöte," arranged for three pianos, with two performers on each, it consequently required *six* pianists to execute it. It appears as though only the extraordinary could excite people's interest—*six* pianists to ensure success! These six were Liszt, Hiller, Pixis, Mortier, Schoberlehrner, Orrigi, the latter the only Italian amongst them. The applause was so great that the overture had to be repeated at a later concert.

Liszt gave three "musical academies" which bore and confirmed his fame all over Italy. The first of these was December 10th, 1837, in the Scala theatre, the other two February 18th and March 15th in the Assembly Rooms. He played for the most part compositions of his own, his "Niobe" and "Glockchen" Fantasias, one of his "Études d'exécution transcendantes," composed in Bellagio, his transfers of Rossini's songs, "La Serenata e l'Orgia," the "Hexameron Variations," and again the "Duet" by Pixis, and the "Overture to the Zauberflöte," with Mortier and the other artists. He also executed Hummel's grand septett, Opus 74.

In general they were not very partial in Italy to piano music, an indifference to which, of

course, its representative, the pianist, fell a victim. Though Italy was the mother country of all technical display, she had her favourites among the virtuosos, and appeared to have forgotten that the first virtuoso on the piano, Domenico Scarlatti, was one of her sons. The singer was king among the virtuosos, the pianist ranked lowest, therefore the latter seldom strayed to Italy; he knew that no laurels would grow for him there.

Liszt, however, in spite of this traditional Italian taste, awakened, like the singer, the enthusiasm of his audience. No pianist had ever before caused such excitement in the musical life of Milan. Not only the elegant circles, not only the musical world, at their head the deified "Swan of Pesaro," streamed into the concert-halls; the whole of the wealthy inhabitants took part in the musical tumult which had entered the gates of Milan with Liszt. His concerts, however, against his will, took such a strange, not to say adventurous, turn, that it is certainly unique in the concert history of our century; but the Milanese were so enthusiastic at this that they forgot their former daily indispensable entertainments at the Scala, their *prima donna*, nay, even their want of susceptibility for the piano! At first Liszt's performances wearied, they were too

serious for them, and they complained of this to him. This gave Liszt the idea of letting the people choose the themes for improvisation, instead of doing so himself, an idea which proved an excellent means of filling up the pauses and keeping up the attention of the audience. There was no longer any question of *ennui*. The gaiety so indispensable to the Italians, and as exemplified in their national “*Opera buffo*,” now reigned in the concert-hall, and insupportable seriousness vanished, only the Milanese public did not perceive that they had undertaken the part of *basso-buffo*.

The *Bachelier-ès-musique* announced these events in his witty, ironical way, in a letter dedicated to Lambart Massart, and written for the Parisian “*Gazette Musicale*.” He reports—

I gave my first concert in Milan at the Teatro della Scala, which, as you know, is one of the largest in the world, and made to bid defiance even to a voice like Lablache’s, or to the mighty echoes of an orchestra like that of the Paris Conservatoire. To speak the truth, I must have made a strange figure there—I, so lank, so *étriqué*, alone with my faithful Erard, quite alone before a public accustomed to show and noise, and strongly spiced musical effect. When you add to these local circumstances that the Italians generally regard instrumental music as a subordinate affair, not to be measured with vocal effects, you will be able to form an idea of the madness of my undertaking.

Very few great pianists have come to Italy. Field is the last, to my knowledge, if not the only one, that has been listened to. No Hummel, no Moscheles, no Kalkbrenner, no Chopin has shown himself on this side of the Alps. The needle of the

golden magnet which attracts talent points in these days to the north. The Medici, the Yonzagas, the d'Este sleep on their marble pillows. No famous Mæcenas calls famous artists to his palaces. If in these days the musician wishes to travel in Italy like me, he must pine for the sun rather than for fame; he must seek repose rather than gold; like me, he must be in love with art, and weary of music, because he understands *nothing* of the former, and because he understands something of the latter.

I found my audience very little prepared to enter into certain well-known ideas of composition and execution—ideas which I obstinately maintain in spite of the shrugs and infallibility of reviewers. Before such an audience, restricted especially to opera music, I ventured to introduce three of my fantasias, certainly not very severe or learned, yet not fitting into the ordinary framework. They were applauded—thanks, perhaps, to some octave passages executed with praiseworthy agility, and several lengthened aria cadences which would have left behind the most persevering of all nightingales. Encouraged by this flattering approbation, and feeling sure of my ground, I almost ran into danger of compromising the whole thing by presenting to the audience one of my last-born darlings—a Prélude Étude (studio), in my own opinion a very good affair. This word “studio,” however, alarmed them at the very beginning, and “Vengo al teatro per divertirmi e non per studiare!” called out a gentleman from the pit, thereby expressing, unfortunately, the feeling of a frightfully predominating majority. And indeed I did not succeed in prevailing with the public to admire my odd idea of playing a study elsewhere than within my own four walls, their opinion evidently being that the piece could have no other aim than to make the joints supple and the fingers pliant. The long-suffering with which the audience heard me to the end I regarded as an especial proof of benevolence.

Another time, in the “Ridotto,” I introduced Hummel's Septett. The regular movement of this work, the majesty of the style, the clearness and plasticity of the ideas render it easy to be understood. The passages which conclude the separate parts never fail of their effect, so this work of art was

received with especial approbation. I should have wished not to stop here, and would have willingly given the Milanese an opportunity of hearing Beethoven's Trios, some works of Weber and Moscheles; but, independently of the want of time, it would have been unwise to bring such wild, northern beauties to ears accustomed to be lulled by the sense-awakening melodies of a Bellini, a Donizetti, or a Mercadante. Germany could give laws to Lombardy, but years may pass before her *music* will penetrate. Bayonets can enforce edicts but not taste.

To give a little cheerfulness to my concerts, which they accused of being too serious, I fell upon the idea of improvising themes proposed by the public, and chosen by acclamation—a manner of improvising which brings public and artist into immediate relation. Those who propose the motive in a manner throw their own self-love into the scale. The reception or the refusal of the themes is a triumph for one, a defeat for the other, a cause of curiosity for all. Every one is eager to hear what the artist will make of the given themes. As often as it appears in a new form, the giver rejoices at the good effect it brings out, to which he has personally contributed. So all produce the work in common, a chiselled work with which the artist encases the jewel entrusted to him.

At my last *séance musicale* a charming silver cup of costly workmanship, supposed to be by one of Cellini's best scholars, was placed at the entrance of the hall to receive the thematic notes. When I proceeded to decipher them, I found, as I expected, a quantity of motives from Bellini and Donizetti; then, to the amusement of all present, appeared a carefully folded note from an anonymous critic, who certainly never doubted the excellence of his choice. The theme was, "Il Duomo di Milano." "Ah!" said I, "that is some one who has profited by his reading, and remembers the words of Madame de Staël, 'La musique est une architecture des sons.' He is eager to compare the two styles of architecture, the disfigured Gothic of the façade and my Ostrogothic musical style, to be able to verify the exactitude of the two ideas."

I would willingly have given him the æsthetical satisfaction of confirming or denying the affirmation of the famous de Staël; but the public did not show the slightest desire to hear my

steeples arise, built up of demi-semiquavers, my gamut galleries, and tenth pinnacles ; so I continued the reading of my papers, which became better and better. A respectable citizen who might have occupied himself with the progress of industry and the advantage of being able to travel from Milan to Venice in six hours, gave me the theme : " *La strada di ferro.*" I should have known no other means of treating this theme than to make an uninterrupted *glissando* scale from top to bottom of the instrument ; but as I should have feared to break my wrist in the attempt to rival an engine, I hastened to open another paper. And what did I find now, think you ? One of the most important questions of human life, to be solved only by *arpeggios*—a question that extends itself to all matters, religion as well as physiology, philosophy as well as national economy. I read, " Is it better to marry or remain a bachelor ? "

As I could only have answered this question by a long pause, I preferred to recall to the audience the words of a wise man, " Whatever conclusion one may come to, whether to marry or to remain single, one will always repent it." You see, my friend, that I have found a splendid means of rendering a concert cheerful when *ennui* makes it rather a cool duty than a pleasure. Was I wrong to say my *Anch' io* in this land of improvisation ?

But there were other musical circles in Milan where the knowledge and cultivation of music extended farther than the *basso buffo* ; and although here, as in all Italy, the preference was given to vocal music, they did not require the cathedral or the railroad to be set to music. Liszt often played in private in the *salons* of the *nobili* and in Rossini's musical *soirées*.

The musical Olympian, who had returned to his native city crowned with glory and laden with gold, loved to gather the talented and music-

loving youth around him at stated intervals to exercise music in company, and to make them acquainted with the darlings of his muse. The most eminent artists and amateurs of Milan were generally assembled in his *salon*, or in that of the beautiful, rich, and art-loving Countess Julie Samoyloff (*née* Countess of Pahlen).

Here Liszt always found a chosen musical public, consisting mostly of dilettanti, it is true, but of rare ability. Among them were the Counts Pompeo and Tonino Belgiojoso—the cousin of the former—both with voices that “Tamburini and Ivanoff might have envied ;” the Countesses Jamaglio and Julie Samoyloff, of whose singing Liszt said that it rivalled the odour of the lily of the valley in sweetness and power. There were also many other eminent singers, harpists, and pianists whose skill and talent might have challenged many a public artist to competition. Rossini often said mockingly of the artists present, “*Here* they are the *undermost*.”

There was no want of eminent artists that winter, however, who gave a loftier tone to this circle of dilettanti. Besides Liszt there were Nourrit, the tenor Poggi, Pasta, &c. Novelties by younger members were also executed at Rossini’s *soirées*; for instance, the twenty-third Psalm of Ferdinand Hiller, who was present

at that time. Those were the circles in which Liszt moved, and which compensated for the slavery from which even the king of virtuosos could not free himself in the concert-room and before the multitude, and which he mentions in his letter to Massart, not without a dash of irony.

The marks of approbation which met him here, as well as before the general public, were unbounded. Half Milan was at his feet, and even the Russian statesman and chancellor, Count Nesselrode, who was travelling through Milan, was induced to mount five stories high to visit the gifted and remarkable artist in his dwelling. Liszt's zealous intercourse with Rossini was a great incitement for him. The geniality, ease, and grace of the latter's genius attracted him as much as the experience, the spirit, and delicate irony of the man of the world. Many parts of his letters written at that time overflow with admiration. One day, when they were engaged in an intimate conversation, and the young man asked the experienced elder in confidence what aim he advised him to select for the future, a bitter pill came by way of answering in reference to his aimless, wandering life : " Vous avez de quoi être un compositeur distingué, un écrivain, un philosophe ; et vous ne viendrez à bout de rien ; "

but this did not hinder him from offering his homage to the genius of the Italian master.

The songs of Rossini's *soirées*, unique in genial ease and sparkling life, were transferred to the piano by Liszt. Though small in form, scarcely any other work renders the gay genius of Italian music in more perfect beauty. Liszt's "Transcriptions des Soirées musicales de Rossini"¹ are in no wise inferior to the melodies themselves; original and translation appear to vie with each other. It must at least have been difficult to decide, as regards effect and completeness, which of the two deserved the preference.

Until this time Liszt had only transferred to the piano some great scores of Berlioz and Beethoven, and some small songs of Schubert's: all compositions of a pre-eminently German direction. It is therefore surprising that now, beside the devotion to the fervid sentiment of Schubert's lyrical blossoms, we find this susceptibility for the Italian muse with her lively, sparkling exterior and gracefully sensitive nature. For both the German and the Italian tendencies seem mutually to exclude each other. Most musical artists who feel a deep sympathy for serious and lofty works of art find only a

¹ Appeared 1838: Ricordi, Milan; and at the same time at B. Schott's sons, in Mayence and Aix-la-Chapelle.

weak echo in their spirits for musical art originating in the pleasure-loving south. Only universally gifted spirits bear in themselves the moods for every vital chord. In Liszt not one was wanting. It only needed a breath to make them vibrate: the Italian string was touched by the intercourse with the Italian *maestro*. No Italian would have rendered on the piano more perfectly than Liszt the cheerful play of the moment, the *stretto* and *fuoco*, the sensual harmonies of enjoyment, the longing, sighing, laughing, and loving, the symmetry and transparency of colour and form, as they are embodied in Rossini's muse.

Liszt's two fantasias, already spoken of, on songs belonging to these *soirées*—"La Pastorella delle Alpi" and "Li Marinari"—were forerunners of these transfers, but are not to be mistaken for them. In the fantasias songs forming contrasts by their nature are united to a whole by an introduction, connecting passages, and cadences, while in the transfers each composition is confined to the limits assigned it by the author. The collection consists of twelve numbers, with the inscriptions—1. "La Promessa;" 2. "La Regata Veneziana;" 3. "L'Invito;" 4. "La Gita in Gondola;" 5. "Il Rimprovero;" 6. "La Pastorella delle Alpi;" 7. "La Partenza;" 8. "La Pesca;" 9. "La

Danya;" 10. "La Serenata;" 11. "L'Orgia;" 12. "Li Marinari." Liszt dedicated these transcriptions to the Countess Julie Samoyloff, at that time the goddess of musical art in Milan.

He did not, however, stop at the transfers of the *soirées*. The principal Rossini transcription belongs also to his Milan episode. This work, called "Transcription de L'Ouverture de Wilhelm Tell,"¹ was for a considerable time the parade-horse of virtuosos.

Liszt also transferred to the piano, but later, two of Rossini's sacred performances, which, however, wear a secular stamp: with these his musical connections with Rossini close. They are "Deux Transcriptions d'après Rossini:"² 1. "Air du Stabat Mater;" 2. "La Charité." Both little works belong to a later time, viz., the years 1840-50.

Liszt left Milan March 16th, and travelled to Venice. But the enthusiasm of the Milanese would not allow him to depart without the promise of returning in the autumn to the coronation of the Austrian emperor, Ferdinand I., as king of Lombardy, to give increased splendour to the festivities through his art. In the meantime, however, Liszt had to learn that

¹ Appeared 1846 (?) Schott's sons.

² Appeared 1853. Schott's sons.

even in Milan the favour of the public was not unchangeable. His residence there had left a sting, which was very painful at the time, but, on the whole, was only a cheerful interlude of his concert experiences. This time, however, it was not enthusiasm, but national pride, which played the part of art critic at Milan.

And all this, as was the case a year before the Thalberg affair, was the fault of his pen, the consequence of a slashing onslaught which the *Bachelier-ès-musique* sent to the Paris "Gazette Musicale."¹ As a correspondent of the paper in question, he had sketched a description of the Scala theatre, its singers, its social life in the boxes, with its public gallantries ; and had added a criticism on the general taste and its direction. This light thrown on their musical condition could not be very flattering to the Milanese. As, however, it originated in objective perceptions, and nothing really good was overlooked—on the contrary, strongly emphasized—it could not, on the whole, be regarded as insulting. Nevertheless, Liszt's report had unforeseen effect, and some uncalled-for representatives of Milanese civilization were so indignant that one day when Liszt was passing through Milan on his way to Genoa, they loaded him with reproaches in the open street

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii. Letter No. 7.

on account of his “ingratitude” towards the Milanese.

Scarcely had the affair become known, when three other journalists on the staff of the “Pirate,” the “Figaro,” and the “Corriere de’ Teatri” turned attention to his essay, and, calling aloud “Guerra al F. Liszt,” sounded the alarm bell of offended national feeling. They drew up certain articles in the form of acts, accusing him of (1) Monstrous ingratitude towards a city which had received him with enthusiasm; (2) reviling the Italian nation by affirming that they do not understand German music; (3) having insulted the honour of husbands, the virtue of wives, and the tenderness of mothers by the assertion that “the custom of receptions in the theatre, and of changing the boxes into *salons*, gave to the social life of women a kind of publicity unknown in France;” (4) insulting the whole *dramatis personæ* of the opera *en masse*—the impresario, the artists, the *prima donna*, the first tenor, the decorator, the chorographer,” &c.

After this enumeration of Liszt’s sins, the “Pirate,” the “Figaro,” and the “Corriere de’ Teatri,” to punish him for his insolent presumption, and to refute his calumnious assertions, (1) Declare that Liszt does not know how to play the pianoforte; and that, if Milan had been

prodigal of applause, she had allowed herself to be led into error by Germany and France ; (2) they assure him that all his endeavours to pass for a Frenchman were in vain—he is no Frenchman, but a Hungarian ; (3) on account of his folly they deliver him up to honour as imperishable “Ameleto che, ammazza un ratto, il *Dottore Faust* portato del diavolo nell’ inferno,” and “because, against all common sense, he wishes to accustom the taste of the Ultramontanes to the ‘stranezza di Beethoven,’ and the ‘Lindura di Weber,’ they surrender him to universal laughter.”¹

The excitement of the Milanese against Liszt was not cooled down by this interesting accusation and condemnation. Abusive and threatening letters, through whose lines the stiletto gleamed, found their way in masses to Lugano, where he was passing the Villegiatura. It was of no use that he assured them, through the “Moda,” that he had never intended to insult the inhabitants of Milan—the excited southern nature would not allow itself to be calmed down. Liszt determined, therefore, to go to Milan and arrange the affair on the spot. And so, one hot summer’s day, he drove fearlessly through the streets of Milan in an open

¹ “Gazette Musicale de Paris,” 1838. No. 31, p. 314. “Correspondance particulière.”

carriage to the Hôtel de la Bella Venezia, to receive and to answer the accusations in person. He addressed the following lines, intended for publicity, to the editor of the "Glissons"—

MONSIEUR,

The invectives and abuse of the journals continue. As I have already said, I will not enter into a paper war. To continue in the tones of the "Pirate" and "Courier des Théâtres" would be only an exchange of incivilities. I can still less answer *anonymous* insults. I declare, then, for the hundredth and last time, that my intention has never been to offer an outrage to the society of Milan. I also declare that I am ready to give all necessary explanations to whoever may come to demand them.

Accept, Sir, &c.,

F. LISZT.

Friday Morning, 20th July,
Hôtel de la Bella Venezia.

So Liszt sat, inwardly armed, awaiting the scenes which might follow; but the pugilists of Milan seemed to be holding their *siesta*—not one of them appeared. He then returned to Lugano and had peace.

But when he came back to Milan in September for the coronation, agreeably to his promise, from which he did not consider himself released by this literary *intermezzo*, it was impossible to get up a concert (even with Ricordi's assistance) to which the general public would extend their patronage. Even a concert in favour of the poor (8th Sept.) was

a failure. The Milanese would not be conciliated. The concert given 10th September for the benefit of the Pio Instituto Teatrale was better attended, but only by persons of the upper classes.

Liszt now left Milan, but not without having once more puzzled the Milanese; this time neither by his improvisations nor his pen, but by a farewell dinner he gave his friends of so different a style from the usual artistic *revanches*, that the Milanese reporter of the Leipsic "Allgemeinen musikalischen Zeitung" thought fit to mention it as a novelty.

One thing is not to be forgotten (so he concluded a concert report). Liszt, the great artist, and truly honourable, beneficent, and only too liberal a man, gave a great dinner at Cona's (a restaurant) to four-and-twenty persons, among them Rossini; for which 622 Austrian lire, ditto fees 34, total 656 lire, were paid. Is not that an extraordinary musical prince?

This was the finale of the Milan episode, which, together with his report, "La Scala,"¹ and another later essay, "On the State of Music in Italy,"² have thrown an interesting and characteristic light on a part of the musical position of Italy, forming an addition of great and abiding worth to the musical history of that country.

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii., Letter No. 8.

² *Ibid.* Letter No. 10.

XXV.

CONCERT EPISODE IN VIENNA.

[Period of travel with the Countess D'Agoult, 1835-1840.]

In Venice. Inundation of the shores of the Danube in Hungary. Liszt's patriotism aroused. Concerts for the Pannonians in Vienna. Splendid success. Original reports of the time. His repertoire and its influence in bringing old music into the concert-hall. Departure.

BETWEEN the beginning and end of the occurrences at Milan just related, there intervened an artistically eventful episode in Liszt's life.

Without any previous plan, without being expected, without any preparation, we see him all at once at Vienna. He shone on the musical horizon, and eclipsed the stars that, just as he appeared, were exciting the admiration and delight of the Viennese in a high degree.

It was an especial occurrence that induced Liszt so suddenly to break through the line of his Italian tour, to appear as a pianist in the Austrian metropolis ; but we will let the events pass before us in due succession.

Liszt had quitted Milan in the middle of March for Venice, where he was already anxiously expected, on account of his great success in the Lombard metropolis. Here he had given a concert in the hall of the Società Apollinese, at which Unger, the bass singer Moriani, and the baritone Ronconi sang, and both at this concert and at a second one, given 1st April in the Teatro San Benedetto, he had received the warmest acclamation from the Venetians.

The artist, in contrast to the lively musical movement in Milan, gave himself up more and more to the moods which the once proud Venezia awakens in poetic wanderers. He had stood before the chief portal of St. Mark's, and his eye had rested pensively on the antique horses under whose feet the gates of the proud basilica open, and which, in the course of a century, had seen four empires fall. He had meditated on the monumental tokens of the former splendour of the city of the Doges, which now in gloomy melancholy seem to mourn over their departed glory; and when the last rays of the setting sun yielded to the thickening veil of night, and motley life began to display itself in the streets with the light of torches and the siren sound of music, he had seated himself on the crowded Riva

degli Schiavoni, a reed pipe between his lips, letting pass before his fancy the captivating pictures of the night—the joy of life—and listening to the midnight bell of San Giorgio sounding in the midst, as it called the Capuchins to prayer with its mysterious warning voice. He had stood “on the Bridge of Sighs,” recalling to his thoughts the meditations of the British poet; and in the stillness of night, sitting in the black gondola, and gliding over the sleeping waters of the lagoons, he had listened to the old and mournful melody of the “Gerusalemme Liberata,” that melody which had not died away under the weight of centuries—

*Canto l'armi pietose e il capitano
Che 'l gran sepolcro liberò di Christo.*

So sings even to-day the gondolier of the lagoons, accompanying the indescribably melancholy air with the slow beat of the oars.

While he thus gave himself up to the charm which floats round the city of the lagoons with its historic splendour, he was roused from his moody dreams to the greatest excitement by a newspaper announcement which led him to Vienna. The event did not touch himself, but it struck the land of his birth; mournful tidings came thence. Pesth had been inundated by the waters rushing down from the mountains,

and its inhabitants, poor and homeless, were obliged to ask shelter from the benevolent. A heartrending cry for help came from Hungary to the neighbouring lands. It was this which awakened Liszt's remembrance of his home, that made him feel he was a son of Hungaria, a brother of the sufferers, which aroused the feeling of nationality with a strength, an enthusiasm, and a joyful self-sacrifice, such as we are wont to see only in the heroes who, sword in hand, fight for honour, or in defence of hearth and liberty.

A residence of fifteen years on the soil of France had buried Liszt's remembrance of his fatherland. His childhood and youth, his education and early experiences, his first sorrows and joys, all that nourishes a feeling of connection, bound him to the French nation. It seemed to him only a dream that he had been cradled in Hungary. The country whose civilization he had adopted had become his native land; but now the events which had fallen so heavily on Pesth called up the feeling and consciousness of his nationality, and, like a stream that had long been kept back, growing stronger and stronger unobserved behind its embankments, it at last broke through all hindrances, and rushed forth a mighty deluge.

In the fulness of his excitement he wrote to

Lambert Massart in Paris, speaking of this awakening of national feeling, that it had been for him "a veritable convulsion."

An extraordinary sympathy (he continues), a lively, irresistible necessity urged me to assist these numerous sufferers. "But how?" I asked myself. "In what way can I bring them help—I who can call nothing mine which makes man powerful, neither riches nor the might of a lofty position? Yet no matter—fowards! I feel that my heart will find no rest, and my eye no sleep, till I have contributed my mite to this great distress. Who knows if the blessing of Heaven will not fall on a feeble sacrifice? The hand that multiplied the loaves in the wilderness is not shortened. God has, perhaps, more joy in the artist's penny than in the gold of the millionaire. The meaning of the word fatherland was revealed to me through these inner movements and feelings. I suddenly transported myself back to the past, and found in my heart the treasures of my childish recollections, pure and untouched. A magnificent landscape rose before my eyes; it was the rocks leaning over the rushing Danube. It was the broad meadow-land, with the peaceful herds grazing at will. It was Hungary, the strong, fertile soil that has brought forth such noble sons! It is my native home. And *I* too," I exclaimed, in a fit of patriotism that perhaps makes you smile, "I too belong to this old and powerful race! I too am a son of this original, untamed nation, which, no doubt, is destined to better days." This race was ever proud and heroic; strong feelings have ever dwelt in those broad breasts. Those proud brows are not made for slavery and poorness of spirit. Their intelligence, happier than that of others, has never been dazzled by deceptive splendour; their feet have never wandered in the path of error; their ear has never listened to false prophets. It has never been said to them—Christ is here . . . He is there. They sleep; but let a mighty noise awaken them—oh, how their spirits will seize the truth! What a strong asylum she will find in their breasts, and their nervous arm will know how to defend her. A glorious future awaits them, for they are brave and strong. Nothing has destroyed their will, nothing has deceived their hopes.

O my wild and distant fatherland ! my unknown friends ! my large, widely spread family ! The cry of thy sorrow hath called me to thee, and lacerated my heart's core. I bow my head ashamed that I have so long forgotten thee !

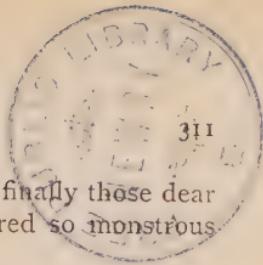
Liszt decided on giving concerts in Vienna for his countrymen. He gave up all his projects for the following week and took the necessary steps to carry out his plan. That was on the 1st of April, before his concert in the Teatro Benedetto, and already on the seventh of the same month he stood before the public in Vienna.

It was his intention to have given two concerts here, one for the benefit of his countrymen, and the other to cover his own expenses. Then his plan was to yield to the awakened yearning for his native land, and, knapsack on back, to wander through the most lonely parts of Hungary. Neither plan was carried out. Tobias Haslinger—the Austrian Ricordi—had undertaken the concert arrangements, and before Liszt was aware of it, the two concerts had become ten, all in one month.

That would have been enough (the artist wrote to Paris) to exhaust a tougher strength than mine, for I figured three times in each concert ; but the sympathy of the public supported me so powerfully and perseveringly that I felt no weariness. There was no danger of my not being understood by so kind and intelligent an audience. I was not at all afraid of introducing the most serious works of Beethoven, Weber, Hummel, Moscheles, and Chopin, Fragments from the “Symphonie fantastique” of

FRANZ LISZT.

Berlioz, fugues by Scarlatti and Handel, and finally those dear Études, those beloved children, which appeared so monstrous to the public of the Scala.



Liszt's appearance was hailed on the part of the Viennese by an enthusiasm which is explained only by the wonders of his performance. All Vienna was in excitement. The artists who just before had been the admiration of the concert seekers — and they were no less than Sigismund Thalberg, Clara Wieck, and Adolf Henselt—were forgotten under the impression of Liszt's superiority. This appreciation was not confined to any particular circle; it was universal. The educated of all ranks vied with each other in enthusiasm for the youth, who both as an artist and as a virtuoso possessed every advantage of originality and genius, and, as a man, so many qualities of greatness and nobility of soul, such a glow of sentiment as would alone have raised him to be one of the rarest and most remarkable appearances of his time. He played before the emperor and the highest court circles; as well as the *élite* of the world of artists and *savants*, no less than the general public. People listened to and had interviews with him both in private circles and in public—and everywhere his success was the same, everywhere eyes and lips overflowed with full and pure enthusiasm. It was one of those

moments—certainly a rare one—in the life of an eminent artist, when, surprised at the originality and enchantment of his being, even ill-will, meanness, and intrigue forget their ready weapons.

In our time, so poor in artistic enthusiasm, with its social transformations, its struggle for interests of state and material existence, and also with its younger phases of modern science and philosophy, it sounds like a fable of olden days when one speaks of such moments of universal *furore*. And yet there was a time, and many of us have lived through it, when our spirits could feel warmed by the might of the ideal, when they did not seem crushed by the heavy burden of the day and were yet untouched by the icy breath of the material and pessimist spiritual currents which flow through the world at the present day. Yes, it sounds like a fairy tale of other days rising from the depths of the present age—a melody after which the artistic ear yearns, but which has long since died away.

The author would appear attempting the impossible, and incur the danger of passing, in the eyes of his reader, for a romancer rather than a historian, if he should endeavour to re-create in fancy moments such as those we have just described, and such as henceforth are inseparable from Liszt's life both in the concert-

hall and elsewhere. And indeed, if he should make the effort, he would fail in conveying a full idea of Liszt's performances and the impressions which he made on his contemporaries, of the enthusiasm which he called forth, and which not seldom passed into exaggeration of feeling and fancy. Let us, therefore, touch upon these important moments of Liszt's virtuoso life, as described in original reports.

Among the many reports which were published by the musical journals, as well as the daily press in general, and the Viennese in particular, concerning Liszt's appearance in Vienna in the spring of 1838, we have chosen three, which, although impressed with the warmth of admiration, do not lose sight of the principal point. The first is taken from a private correspondence of Robert Schumann, and was published at the time in the "Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik," edited by himself; the second is by a Viennese reporter of the "Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung," edited at that time by Christian W. Fink, Leipsic; the third is from the pen of Sophir, written for his journal "Der Humorist," appearing in Vienna.

The impression is too new and powerful, too unexpected (so runs the correspondence of the first reporter,¹ dated 13th

¹ Probably Fischhof, with whom R. Schumann was then in correspondence.

April) to give place as yet to commentary, that is, to reflection. A phenomenon so entirely different from all other artists has never yet been seen. The general standard is here of no use ; for it is not alone the gigantic, which is indeed difficult, but not impossible to fathom, no, it is the peculiar spirituality, the immediate breath of genius, which can be better felt than described.

Imagine an extremely thin, narrow-shouldered, slender man, with hair falling over his face and neck, an uncommonly intellectual, lively, pale, highly interesting countenance, an extremely animated manner, an eye capable of every expression, beaming in conversation, a benevolent glance, strongly accentuated speech, and you have Liszt, as he is in general ; but when he seats himself at the instrument, he strokes his hair behind his ear, his glance is staring, his eye hollow, the upper part of the body quieter, only the head moves, and the expression of the face changes, and mirrors every passing mood that seizes him, or that he wishes to call forth, in which he always succeeds. This fantastic exterior is only the covering of an interior volcano, from which tones are hurled like flames and gigantic ruins, not caressing, but with the force of thunderbolts. One thinks neither of his hands, nor of the mechanism, technicality, nor of the instrument ; he seizes our soul, carried away by an unknown impression, and raises it violently to his own height, making all Philistines giddy. When this can go no further, it lasts a while, then suddenly the Titan is touched with compassion and sets hearers unexpectedly, and therefore not seldom rudely on the earth, leads them through green meadows, yet does not grant them the comfortable repose for which they long, but increases their heart-beating by maliciously summoning serpents and other reptiles from the odorous shrubs.

The piano seems only the weak instrument of an inner tumult, and he stands so high above all technicality that an analysis is not to be thought of, even with the intention of making something of it one's own. He is therefore no model for imitation ; only a gigantic spirit could follow him equal to himself and seeking an independent path. In a word, one can form no idea of this playing, one must hear it. This has been granted me twice. On the day of his arrival he played at Professor

Fischhof's some *Études* of his own composition, then he read at first sight Schumann's "Phantasie-stück," but in so perfect a manner, and particularly the "end of the song," so touchingly, that I shall never forget it. After this he eagerly seized compositions that he had not yet found in Italy, such as Mendelssohn's "Preludes and Fugues for the Organ," which he played on the piano alone without pedals, but with swells and redoublings it was quite heavenly. Then some new *Études* by Chopin, which for the most part were unknown to him. Thursday he played in Gross's *atelier*, in presence of Clara Wieck, Czerny (his former teacher), and many others : he executed two fantasias (he called them *Études*), the second in G flat¹ especially was played with immense effect ; then a part of his fantasia on the "Puritans," and finally a scherzo by Czerny from his older sonata, Opus 7. In truth, he shook our inmost souls.

In a similar manner, Breitkopf and Härtel's "Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung" dedicated to him an especial paragraph, instead of the usual Programme ; because, as they said, "extraordinary events require extraordinary notice." This article, "Liszt in Vienna," forms the complement to the other and runs as follows—

We have now heard him, the strange wonder, whom the superstition of past ages, possessed by the delusion that such things could never be done without the help of the Evil One, would undoubtedly have condemned without mercy to the stake—we have heard him, and seen him too, which, of course makes a part of the affair.

Look only at the pale, slender youth in his eccentric garb ; the long, lank, floating hair, the thin arms, the small and delicately formed hands ; the almost gloomy and yet childlike pleasant face—those features so strongly stamped and full of meaning, in this respect reminding one of Paganini.

¹ The number of the *Études d'exécution transcendantes* inscribed "Vision."

Liszt made his *début* by executing Weber's Concerto in F flat. Karl Maria played us this beautiful and strongly conceived composition about twenty years ago ; his hearers were indifferent if not cold. Several pianists of both sexes had ventured on it at different times ; but Bocklet was the only one who succeeded in awakening a higher sympathy for it. This notorious fact was not unknown to our worthy guest : but he wished, according to his own expression, to bring the favourite child of the glorious master into honour among the Viennese. And so it was ! No one imagined he was listening to the same piece ; the very identical tones—perhaps not one more or less—and yet so infinitely different ! Through a peculiar fingering in which the thumbs play the most varied part, through a technicality cultivated to perfection, a touch which passes through all conceivable degrees, from the slightest breath to the most appalling tempest—through all these things he brings forth the most stupendous effects : effects of detail of which one would not have thought the instrument capable. The introductory *largo* was executed with melancholy pathos, with passionate feeling, speaking to the inmost heart ; every tone a complaint of the oppressed spirit, a sigh of the troubled, anguished soul. The measure of the first and final *allegros* was so rapid that one trembled lest he should give way. Far from it ! The pining David became a Goliath. The lavishly expended strength seemed to grow continually, and the flood of tones rushed forth in one stream, yet perfectly clear and intelligible to the last chord, with which a shout of approbation was mingled that seemed as if it would never end, and for which the expression "enthusiastic" is only an empty unmeaning sound. When in the magnificent *marziale* the orchestra swelled to *fortissimo*, and the musical autocrat thundered in, overpowering the whole mass of instruments—one was forcibly reminded of the reign of an Angelica Catalani in the London opera house, when she chanted "Rule Britannia," or "God save the King," and her mighty bell-like organ sounded above the thousand voices of the audience in chorus. Here the storm of applause broke through all bounds, and the virtuoso was so affected by such acknowledgment of his worth that, accustomed as he is to homage from the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne and the Thames, the hot tears rolled down his cheeks.

The solo pieces that followed were the great Fantasia "Réminiscences des Puritains," "Valse di Bravura," and "Grande Étude," wonderfully strange creations of tone, true facsimiles of their author, which perhaps could only interest by such execution, only come into real being under his hands and animated by his spirit, but which, understood in the sense indicated by the designation, would probably form a confused chaos. They contain a sum of difficulties which appear to the most practised players like Bohemian villages ; passages and changes of figuration only for one hand, that one must really see the other resting inactive to be convinced of the possibility of the miracle. Although the virtuoso performed his gigantic task with body and soul, there was not the slightest trace of physical enervation ; on the contrary, he corresponded to the almost tumultuous wish for a repetition of the final Étude with loftier exaltation, and with an expense of strength which almost amounted to a new miracle.

That Liszt can do everything he wills was clearly proved by his accompaniment of Beethoven's "Adelaide," which the esteemed dilettante Mr. Benedict Gross executed with touching expression ; his voice, though extremely musical, is not particularly strong, and it might have suffered from a less discreet accompanist ; but in this case there was no fear, for his companion willingly subordinated himself, moulding his tones with tender fervour to the song, and only being heard independently when freer space was allowed him ; but then, as it were a singer, he allured from the instrument the sweetest most enchanting sounds that melted into one with the voice, so that the effect was really ethereal, and all eyes were wet with tears.

The arrival of this phenomenon amongst pianists was so unexpected, and his stay of so short a duration, that the longing to hear and to admire him is quite pardonable. Invitation upon invitation from the highest nobility and most distinguished families pressed and crossed each other daily, nay hourly ; and the modest, unassuming artist, doubly amiable by his obliging courtesy, which can refuse no one anything, is quite out of breath ; sometimes, indeed, he was obliged to divide his favours.

It was at an interesting *soirée* of the court musical publisher's,

Mr. Tobias Haslinger, before a select circle of artist guests, that Liszt played Beethoven's trio in B flat with Mayseder and Merk. It was more than beautiful; servilely true to the original, but confined in a framework which, like the foil of a picture, threw out its imperishable charms. It was indeed an incomparable triplet, perfect to enchantment, and it was plainly to be read in the features of all that no one had even heard the well-known creation in such spiritual accordance!

He gave as an intermezzo some of Schubert's songs, arranged by himself for the piano, omitting the voice; trifles it is true, yet of more weight than many a large folio. There are no words to express this shading, it is the triumph of grace; when the right hand sings so deliciously, one does not miss the human voice, and the Italian, with intoxicated glance, would have exclaimed, "Ah! questa tocca!"

It was quite natural that the comparatively few who till now have heard the wondrous youth should wish to partake often of so rare an enjoyment, and that the far outnumbering majority, who were not reckoned among those happy ones, should be seized with the same desire. The natural consequence was a second concert, arranged for the 23rd of this month, five days later. The hall had not been so crowded even at his *début*. The heat was almost insupportable. Water dripped from the ceiling and the side walls; one was ready to faint. The giver of the festival, accompanied by Messrs. Zierer, Uhlmann, König, Holz, Meik, and Sluma, played Hummel's Septett in D flat; then, without accompaniment, the "Ständchen" and "Lob der Thränen," by Schubert; finally, a Grand Fantasia on a Thema by Pacini. He adorned the first-named composition (Hummel's Septett) with such a fulness of grasp, such doublings of the octaves in the most difficult passages, that one seemed to hear two performers and two instruments. In the songs, the highest originality of execution puzzled and delighted at once, especially that part where the crossed left hand, as soprano, imitated the whole melody a bar later. The astonishing colouring of fancy in effects and turns never before heard, excited such a general salvo of applause, which threatened not to end before midnight, and was coupled with such repeated encores that it would be a vain trouble to relate it all.

Who can doubt that this meteor has set in motion all the ready pens of the imperial city. Kriehuber has lithographed him to the life. Saphir, who is no musician by profession, yet a poet, has portrayed him most characteristically.

Let us now follow Saphir's portrait which the Viennese reporter has placed by chance, yet very justly, beside Kriehuber's lithography, for they both will stand beside each other, forming a mutual complement in reference to this period of Liszt's concerts. Saphir, not as a painter, but as a poet, turned to the Psyche of Liszt's artistic appearance, and gave it all the tangibility of a picture, designing and painting the personality of the virtuoso with the pencil and the colouring of speech.

Liszt knows no rule, no form, no law (writes Saphir) ; *he creates them all himself!* The strange becomes genial, the alien a necessity of life, the astonishing an infinitely graceful girdle enclosing the peculiar, marvellously constructed, incomprehensible building up of his equally peculiar formation of art! In him the sublime borders on the bizarre, the lofty on the childlike, the most enormous strength on thoughtful tenderness, the unattainable thousandfold technicalities on the tender secrets of the powers of the soul, the strivings after the highest force mingles with the sweet dream-life of the most intimate feeling. He remains an inexplicable phenomenon, a compound of such heterogeneous, strangely mixed materials, that an analysis would inevitably destroy what lends the highest charm, the individual enchantment; namely, the inscrutable secret of this chemical mixture of genial coquetry and childlike simplicity, of caprice and divine nobleness.

After the concert he stands like a hero and a conqueror on the field of battle; vanquished pianos lie about him, broken

strings flutter as trophies and flags of truce, frightened instruments flee in their terror into distant corners, the hearers look at each other dumbly, as if a tempest had fallen from a cloudless sky, as if thunder and lightning had mingled with a shower of blossoms and buds and dazzling rainbows ; and he the Prometheus, who creates a form from every note, a magnetizer who conjures the electric fluid from every key, a gnome, an amiable monster, who now treats his beloved, the piano, tenderly, then tyrannically ; caresses, pouts, scolds, strikes, and then, all the more fervently, with all the fire and glow of love, throws his arms around her with a shout, and away with her through all space ; he stands there, his head bent, leaning on a chair, with a strange mournful smile, like a note of exclamation after the outburst of universal admiration. This is Franz Liszt !

The chapter “Liszt in Vienna” was not at all exhausted by these and similar reports. He was in all the daily journals, and he and his art were a rich source of artistic, scientific, and amusing sketches and analyses. There was also no lack of parallels with other artists. One of these from the pen of Robert Schumann’s private correspondent already mentioned is original and interesting. While yet under the impressions he had received from Adolf Henselt, Sigismund Thalberg, and Clara Wieck, he had the idea of placing these artists in comparison with Liszt, more perhaps with the intention of sketching these interesting personages for Schumann alone than for the public. The following is the result at which he arrived—

In Liszt (he says) the most passionate declamation is conspicuous ; in Thalberg, the most delicate sensibility ; in Clara

Wieck, natural enthusiasm; in Henselt, genuine German lyricism. Thalberg is highly pleasing, nay, often delightful; Liszt, demoniac; Clara Wieck transports to the highest regions; Henselt, gently excites.

Purity of style: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara; (3) Henselt; (4) Liszt.

Improvisation: (1) Liszt; (2) Clara.

Feeling and warmth: (1) Liszt; (2) Henselt; (3) Clara.

Deep artistic nature: (1) Liszt; (2) Clara.

High-soaring mind: Liszt.

Pliability and knowledge of the world: Thalberg.

Affected demeanour: Henselt (?)

Originality without any previous example: Liszt.

Thoughts turned inwardly: Clara.

Prima Vista play: (1) Liszt; (2) Thalberg; (3) Clara.

Variety: (1) Clara; (2) Liszt; (3) Thalberg; (4) Henselt.

Musical learning: (1) Thalberg; (2) Henselt; (3) Clara; (4) Liszt.

Beauty of touch: (1) Thalberg; (2) Henselt; (3) Clara; (4) Liszt.

Boldness: (1) Liszt; (2) Clara.

Egotism: (1) Liszt; (2) Henselt.

Recognizing the thoughts of others: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara.

Exercise, free: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara. Servile: Henselt.

Giving the character of the piece without influence of the individual: None.

To be set up as models: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara.

Ease, physical: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara; (3) Henselt. Ease in studying: (1) Liszt; (2) Thalberg; (3) Clara.

Without grimaces in playing: (1) Thalberg; (2) Clara.

Liszt, the representative of the French romantic school.

Thalberg, the representative of the Italian flattering school.

Henselt and Clara, representatives of the German sentimental school.

However daring and incorrect such comparisons may be in general, and especially when, as here, they are formed from impressions just received, over which no time for proof has

passed, yet they are all the more interesting to posterity, who derive their comparisons and decisions from the sum of the general appearance of the artist in question, and not, as is here the case, from the living features taken at the moment. The four virtuosos were four great ones ; and although the musical world had already quarrelled about some of them—viz., Thalberg and Liszt—and though they were already celebrities, yet they were all at the beginning of their artistic career. It is therefore astonishing that the principal lines of such a comparison should agree with what has been confirmed at a later time. Though every single line could not be true to a hair, and though much was lost in so hasty a sketch, yet it gave for that time, and as far as an unprejudiced but subjective eye could then see, a faithful, general outline of this artistic quatrefoil, and it has become an artist group sketched from nature for the history of virtuosoship, which, with the "portrait" of Liszt by Saphir, is one of the most interesting pictures of that period.

Within four or five weeks Liszt gave six concerts and a musical *soirée*, besides the first, announced for the benefit of the towns Ofen and Pesth, each of which brought in from 1600 to 1800 silver gulden.¹ He played twice

¹ 3200-3600 marks German Imperial.

for other beneficent objects—for the *sœurs de charité* and for the Blind Institution. He also assisted a female singer who was passing through, a decayed ladyship, appearing under the pseudonym of Angelica Sacy. He played twice before the imperial court, as well as in the noblest families, at many artistic meetings, in the *ateliers* of the first pianoforte manufacturers, at his own lodgings. He was never chary of his art, and the slightest wish hinted by a friend sufficed to chain him to the piano for hours.

In his public concerts he played with unheard of conception—

Weber's Concerto.

” Aufforderung zum Tanz.

Beethoven's Sonata in A flat major.

” Sonata in E flat minor.

” Trio in B sharp.

Hummel's Septett in D flat.

Moscheles

Kessler

Handel

Scarlatti

Chopin

} Smaller solo pieces, fugues, and Études.

Czerny's Sonata in A flat major (his own transcription).

Schubert's Praise of Tears.

” Serenade.

Rossini's Tell Overture.

” Li Marinari.

” La Tarantella from the *Soirées*.

” La Serenata e l'Orgia (Fantaisie, Opus 8).

Berlioz's Fragments of the Symphony Fantastic :

(a) Un bal ;

(b) Marche au Supplice.

Of his own compositions he played—

Liszt's Niobe Fantasia.

- „ Réminiscences des Huguenots.
- „ Réminiscences de la Juive.
- „ Fantaisie sur une Mélodie Suisse.
- „ Rondeau fantastique (Il Contrabandista).
- „ Étude in A flat.
- „ Galop chromatique.

Hexameron.

Those were the compositions which he executed in public. Besides these he played in private circles “*prima vista*” new pieces by Mendelssohn, Schumann, manuscripts by Viennese and other composers ; everything, in fact, that was asked for and whatever came in his way, and, for the most part in the spirit of the composer, but often even more beautifully than their authors had conceived possible ! The Viennese were particularly struck with Liszt's programme, both by the strength of memory he evinced in executing each piece, even the “Ensembles,” by heart, showing himself to be a magazine of the whole of musical literature, and by his skill in performing with equal beauty and in the spirit peculiar to each composition belonging to the most different epochs. At one moment he excited his hearers by his own compositions, brilliant with the colouring of poetical romantic execution, or by the fantasias of his friends Chopin and Berlioz, pointing to

new paths ; the next moment he conjured the mighty names of Beethoven, or poured forth intoxicatingly from the horn of plenty of Schubert, Rossini, Hummel, Weber, and others the most delicious melodies and the most splendid, sparkling passages, or fetched from the forgotten treasures of Domenico, Scarlatti, and Handel creations full of pulsating life in spite of the chains of formality. The musical treasures of Italy, Germany, France, of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, lay open before him and obeyed his spirit. He was an enchanter who exorcised the spirits of the living and the dead. This it was—this omnipotence expressed by his *répertoire* and his playing, this character stamped with a universal direction, that has effect in the highest degree on the Viennese, spoiled as they were, possessing the most distinguished musical spirits within their walls, welcoming the most eminent virtuosos ; this it was which fanned their enthusiasm to full flame.

Liszt's *répertoire* had also an especial after influence, containing, as it did, compositions for the pianoforte still older than the Viennese epoch. In general the musical taste of that time was directed towards the brilliancy of the virtuosoship of the Restoration, and the public felt no sympathy, either direct or indirect, for the music of older times, consequently the

concert programme was extremely partial. The sense for historic music lay yet uncultivated. But now that Liszt played Scarlatti's Cat's Fugue to the Viennese, they were so interested for this master that soon after one of the musical publishers of Vienna, Tobias Haslinger, ventured to set on foot a subscription for the first complete collection of D. Scarlatti's pianoforte pieces, edited by Charles Czerny, with the remark, "*It is Liszt* who gave the first idea of this undertaking." Liszt's introduction of the Cat's Fugue into the concert-hall soon found imitators. Other pianists brought out further pieces of the older masters, and gradually it became for the concert givers a mark of *haut ton* to take "historical pieces" into their *répertoire*. Liszt's example had first awakened a sense for this class of music, and as the idea gained strength, the musical archives of art treasures were ransacked, and many a gem was reproduced in the concert-hall as well as through the press, thereby becoming the common possession of all. Everywhere new life followed his footsteps.

If Liszt reigned and electrified in the concert-hall of Vienna by the sovereignty of his genius, he ruled in private life by his characteristic qualities. In private, as in public, he awakened a glow of admiration. They looked up aston-

ished at the youth who had sent to his indigent countrymen, without any reserve, the splendid proceeds of a concert, to the amount of some thousands, and they knew that besides this he had in secret dried many a tearful eye and refreshed many a sufferer, and yet had received the homage offered him with almost childish modesty ; they were aware that, born in straitened circumstances and without riches, he only attributed worth to earthly possessions in so far as they enabled him to help his fellow creatures and to rejoice his friends, yet with all this he was far from indulging in that gay levity which is wont to follow the footsteps of the sons of Apollo ! In the drawing-room they were delighted at his sparkling wit and the brilliancy of his spirit ; there was a constraining intoxication in the atmosphere of his art and of his personality. Societies named him their honorary member, vying with each other in all sorts of distinctions ; festivities, arranged in his honour, pressed one upon another. He also gave a return. As his concerts formerly in Paris, now in Vienna, outdid the traditional style, and resembled rather a grand rout of guests invited to the purest enjoyment of art than a public concert, so now at *fêtes* the bonds of rank were severed, and “princes, counts, excellencies, statesmen, musicians, *lite-*

rati, painters and dealers in works of art" met in unconstrained gaiety.¹ There was sparkling champagne both of wit and wine.

An especial blessing lay on the "artist's penny" which he had sent to Pesth, to the Committee of Help for the inundated Pannonians. His magnanimous example was a signal which called the benevolence of others into emulation. No one would be behind the artist, and sum after sum, greater than at any other time, took the road to Hungary to lessen the affliction.

Liszt's project, however, of wandering through the fairest regions of his native land "with his knapsack on his back" was not realized. News from Italy of the illness of the Countess d'Agoult obliged him to return without delay to Venice. Many ovations already in preparation were put a stop to by this sudden departure, yet on the eve of the same the *élite* of his admirers assembled in the Hotel Stadt Frankfurt, where he was staying, to take leave of him; not without emotion and mutual promises, and only when the purple beams of the morning sun announced the approaching day, did they depart.

After a short repose, Liszt took the road to Venice. This was on the 29th May. It was

¹ After the report of the Leipsic "Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung," 1838, Nos. 20, 35, 38, 48.

still the time of red and yellow post *calèches*, horn-blowing postilions, whose plumes waved merrily in the air, while the melodies which they allured from their horns as they echoed through woods, meadows, and mountains, not seldom mourned over the separation and sympathized with the traveller's mood. But now the ringing of the post-horn announced to Liszt that the first post-station from Vienna, Neudorf, was reached. The artist was not a little astonished to hear greetings of welcome, and to see the whole society before him from whom he separated at daybreak, who, without his knowledge, had preceded him to take a last farewell.

A lively scene took place before the post-house in Neudorf—shaking of hands, embracings, ringing of glasses, and in a corner stood the painter Kriehuber, as with hasty strokes he drew a last sketch of "Liszt in his travelling cloak," all present subscribing their names, which this the artist promised to lithograph as a memorial for all.¹ Then Liszt took leave a second time. More pressures of the hand, a shout of good wishes, and the horses galloped off towards Italy.

¹ This lithograph appeared at the time at Höfelich's in Vienna. Another lithograph by the same artist, Liszt in dress coat, with a motto by Saphir, appeared 1838 at Haslinger's.

XXVI.

*LISZT AND THE GERMAN MUSICAL SONG.
HIS SCHUBERT TRANSFERS.*

Liszt's comprehension of the German song. His general means of musical translation. The æsthetic mission of translation common to all arts, and that of music especially. The difference between the song and orchestral pieces as translated into pianoforte music. Liszt's poetico-musical medium of translation, especially his variation as a means of depicting poetry, mood, and situation. His transfer of Schubert's Serenade as an example. General review of his arrangements and transfers of Schubert's compositions.

LISZT had inspired, electrified, intoxicated his hearers in the Viennese concert-halls, but he had the most deeply excited and touched their hearts by the songs which he sang on the piano —*sang* with a delicious fervour, a melting of the soul, a charm and a variety of expression, such as till then the human voice alone had been capable of creating. His play of melody was so new and unlooked for that only those who have heard him can form an idea of it. Those at a distance shook their heads, and when the reporter to Breitkopf and Härtel's musical paper

in Leipsic wrote, "The instrument by his depth of feeling has become his slave; he tames it with irresistible force, and *obliges it to sing* as no one has done before him," the editor, the musical *savant* Gottfried W. Fink, could not refrain from the significant remark at the foot of the page, "the latter is strange; but we have not yet heard him."

With the melodies with which Liszt called forth such delight and such admiration, he stood on Germanic ground. It was Franz Schubert's songs which, transferred while in Paris, Geneva, and Rohant, he had now revised and for the first time played in public. The "Praise of Tears," and the serenade "Hark! hark! the lark," were the first by which he proved, through the effect they produced, how well he understood the very inmost secrets of the national instincts, and how deeply they lived in his own spirit; for musical song is the genuine child of the German soul, of the German mind, of the German dreams. It is an offspring which reflects at every turn the features of its parentage, but its effects can only be rendered by artists who have received into their own hearts the rich harmonies of the country.

In his transfers Liszt has rendered all the essential qualities of the musical song in the

most perfect manner, refraining with sacred awe from all additions or alterations. With the instinct of genius, he felt that the transfer of German songs was something else than that of an Italian air, or than the arrangement of an operatic melody. It must be allowed that he was guided by the finest feeling for the character and spirit, the nationality and the intentions of the composer. He did not work after *one* receipt, *one* pattern, *one* method ; no, it is remarkable that he created each transfer from the spirit and intention of the composer, according to the needs and requirements of the case. He had an inborn “right of translation for all lands.”

None of the German songs which he has lent to the piano have lost thereby a single feature of their nature or originality. One cannot fail to perceive lofty charms in almost every song he has transferred, yet the original has not suffered the slightest compromise. Oftentimes it is only the doubling of a tone that till then had been buried in the mass, the raising of an accompanying voice hitherto nearly suppressed, a single bass note played an octave lower than the composer had written it, a chord heretofore narrow now widened to relieve its dulness ; trifles such as these throw a light so in unison with the passage thus treated that one asks in

astonishment, Why did not the composer do it himself? One feels at every little change, as the song is now so the poet and the composer must have felt it within themselves—so, and not otherwise! It is surprising how things of the kind, apparently unmeaning or insignificant, can lend light, colour, and feeling. One tone more or less lets us breathe as though a weight had been removed ; it can make a word shine as though it were surrounded by a sunbeam, or can wrap it as with a veil ; it can hurl a thunder-bolt into a whole passion-breathing strophe, and tame the fury to a dumb murmur that does not come to expression. The inspiration of genius is needed to find such a tone. Liszt, however, never failed in this respect.

Such are the means by which he has enhanced the charms of his transferred songs, and cast a clearer light on single parts, encircling the composer's work with a halo of beauty which it had never hitherto possessed. Other changes introduced by him lay in the spirit of the translation, in the *from what* to the *to what*. It may be taken as a general rule that transfers of songs to the pianoforte require the same conditions as when the effects of the orchestra are reproduced on that instrument ; yet the æsthetic requirements in each case are widely divergent. This difference

lies in their foundations : the one in words, the other in tone. Two kinds of roots cannot produce the same plant. Words, as representatives of thought and imaginative poetry, and tone as expressive of feeling and of absolute musical poetry, point to a different treatment, which must not be overlooked in each kind of transfer, otherwise the logic of the piece would be irrational, and the first conditions of effect disregarded. Word and tone must never be antagonistic. Liszt has kept these essentials clearly in view in his transfers, which are, up to the present day, the only artistic creations of their kind which have appeared : the only works which propose a question as yet fully untouched by æsthetics, and not only propose, but also answer it ; and in this separation lies their especial artistic worth and their æsthetic significance, which are both great enough to raise them to a new branch of art.

Yet both kinds of transfer—the vocal and the instrumental—belong to one category of mental action, that of translation. As with language and the plastic arts, so here the end to be achieved is, that the original in its transfer to another sphere should not only lose nothing of its primitive form and character, but should also fulfil all the conditions which are required in a work thought out and felt in another domain of

art. As the réproduction of an oil painting on copperplate fulfils all the requirements of perfection only when the picture presented is not merely a faithful rendering of the original in all its essential characteristics, but has charms of its own which cast into oblivion the canvas scene which inspired the engraver's pen; as, again, the translation of a poem into another language can satisfy only when it seizes the thoughts and fancies of the author as if conceived in the new tongue—even so musical transfer can be perfect only when it remains true to the original, and at the same time seems imbued with the peculiarities of the instrument from which it is transferred. Then this, and this alone, is a work of art which can stand beside the original. Be it a song, then the words must not be missed, while the melody becomes a pianoforte piece without having effaced the original. In like manner the transfer of an orchestral composition to the piano can only attain the dizzy heights of grandeur and sublimity when it makes us forget the sound of the different orchestral instruments, and the symphony is converted into a pianoforte composition.

Nevertheless the transfer of a song has one requirement more than an orchestral work demands, and this arises from the poetic contents

of the former. To translate from tone into tone is one thing, to translate from word and tone into tone another. In the latter case insurmountable difficulties seem to lie at the first step ; for the words on which the music is founded give the melody its significance and the explanation of its contents, and yet they must be banished. On the one hand, the want of words must not be felt, nor must the effect of the original be weakened ; yet, on the other, the production, while exhibiting the essential characteristics of the pianoforte, must embody the fancies of the poet and the ideas of the composer—an apparently insurmountable difficulty.

Liszt in his transfers, with the flash of genius, has overcome all the hindrances that here met him, and has taught, in the simplest manner, how the æsthetic unity is to be restored, and the poetic contents as well as the form of the original to be framed into a pianoforte song. He employed the same means that instrumental music has created in its endeavours to free itself from its isolation of feeling and to unite itself with poetic verse : sharpness of expression and characteristic tone - painting, as well of feeling as of situation.

Yet the nature of the compositions themselves prevented the free use of means which would otherwise have been at Liszt's disposal ;

for his arrangements are not fantasias upon songs, but translations upon them, so he was compelled to keep within the limits which the original offered. This latter may appear small, mean, insignificant to the common eye, but genius takes a spark and under its breath it becomes a flame! Liszt has not essentially modified either the harmonious, melodious, or rhythmical foundations in his transfers of German songs, and yet his efforts are rich in changes, though only such as lie in the spirit of translation without removing the distinctive feature.

Most of his alterations are in the accompaniment. From it he drew abundant means for intensifying the expression and delineating both mood and situation ; sometimes, as has been already pointed out, by a tone, a chord, a measure ; sometimes by a whole succession of chords or waving *arpeggios*. He seldom changes the harmony, and then only on the foundation given by the composer ; consequently it extends only to a chromatic change of certain tones.

Liszt frequently employs the variation as a means for painting poesy, mood, and situation. He thereby fulfils the requirements which—after his example—make transfer a work of art, and raise it to the height of an original ; he does not, however, always adopt this means, but only when the melody and accompaniment

of the first verse of the song is repeated, as is generally the case in Schubert's pieces. That monotony which always attaches to a song which is reproduced in each succeeding verse, and which only a thoroughly educated and imaginative singer can overcome by an execution according to the contents of each strophe, Liszt has set aside in his transfers by somewhat varying the theme as it reappears.

By this simple means, in which the *how* remains the essential part, Liszt not only raised his song-transfers to the height of the original ; but—the creator of the idea of musical translation in general—he has in reality established a new branch of art. His translations of Schubert's songs, wherein he has converted the words into tones, are the ideal of this new category. The fancy of the song has inspired the music, and the verse itself floats like an invisible programme round the spiritual web of tone.

When Liszt stood before the public for the first time with the transfer of one of Schubert's songs, the "Serenade," with words from Shakespeare, there were shouts of delight. The little change he had made at the very beginning of his transfer in the accompaniment representing the song of the lark had a new and brilliant effect, though he had only introduced higher notes than appeared in the original—a

simple device which relieved the monotony of the accompaniment which Schubert had given it, and placed it, as it were, above the general colouring. The lark was now heard from above singing in the ether. Now she floated with her rhythmical "fear God," as the people's poesy has translated her warbling, above the cheerful meadows and above a cheerful human heart ! How tenderly caressing it whispers—

Wenn schon die liebe ganze Nacht
Der sterne lichtes Heer
Hoch über Dir im Wechsel.

How enchantingly sounded the *arpeggios* with which the second half of this verse begins, weaving dreamy threads, as it were, around the fair sleeper ! How it vibrated quick and warm—

Weit Du doch gar so reizend bist,
Du süsse Maid, steh auf.

And then the conclusion ! He has given it an ideal turn quite peculiar to the German song by a little rhythmical and a mere chromatic change of a single harmony. A slight pause separates the last call, "Du süsse Maid, steh auf," from what has gone before, and while this begins, or, more properly, should begin, the warbling of the lark ceases, and the call melts into chords full of devotion, which, like a faint sunbeam, float above the sleeper's head. Now again one hears the call of the birā, but, as it

were, vanishing in the distance—such turns from the mundane sphere to the realms of purity form one of the specific peculiarities of the German lyric school.

Liszt's audience at Vienna were spell-bound at this transfer. They were also delighted with the others, the "Praise of Tears" and the "Post;" less, however, with the "Rose," which he also executed. They called for these songs again and again, and the *da capo* was followed by *da capo* again. They also wished to see them in print, and so they appeared in the spring of 1836 at Tobias Haslinger's, with the title at that time fashionable, but omitted in the following editions—

Hommage aux Dames de Vienne. Lieder von Fr. Schubert, transkribirt, &c.

1. Das Ständchen.	3. Lob der Thränen.
2. Die Post.	4. Die Rose.

A second and fuller collection followed under the title—

Zwölf Lieder von Franz Schubert, für das Pianoforte übertragen, &c.¹

1. Sei mir gegrüsst.	2. Auf dem Wasser.
3. Du bist die Ruh.	4. Erlkönig.
5. Meerestille.	6. Die junge Nonne.
7. Frühlingsglaube.	8. Gretchen am Spinnrad.
9. Ständchen.	10. Rastlose Liebe.
11. Der Wanderer.	12. Ave Maria.

¹ Published by Anton Diabelli, 1839 (?)

Not only the Viennese, the whole musical world of Europe was delighted with these transfers, and even Dame Criticism herself found them "charming" and "ingenious." They established Liszt's universal fame as a translator, and at the same time were the beginning of a new era in the domain of art. From that moment the inconsistent and senseless manner of transcribing and arranging for the pianoforte ceased.

The above-named arrangements of Schubert's songs were not his only attempts, for Schubert's muse, with her German poesy, had crept deep into his heart.

Schubert is the most poetical of all the musicians that ever existed (full of enthusiasm, he wrote at that time to Paris). French translations can only give a very imperfect idea of the beauty of these truly magnificent verses united to Schubert's music. The German language exercises a strange influence on the mind, and only a German can fully comprehend that child-like purity, that melancholy resignation, which has thrown so peculiar a charm over Schubert's compositions.

This admiration and love for Schubert's lyrics accompanied Liszt through every period of his life. He never ceased to occupy himself with them in all their branches. Either he translated the songs or arranged the accompaniments for the orchestra, or changed his waltz melodies into the most charming concert-pieces, or took his piano music in general — his Marches,

Moments musicaux, Impromptus, Sonatas, Fantasias—and arranged and gave them anew to a generation which had ceased to feel and to think in classically musical forms; yet, though he had dealt with these according to the progress in pianoforte music and in the more strongly developed sentiment of sounds, he has entirely refrained from all change of, or addition to, the original, as apart from the sentiment of the composer. He translated several marches from the piano to the orchestra, raised them by his spiritual and characteristic instrumentation, as it were, from a sketch in chalk to a living picture.¹ His love and his activity were also extended to

¹ Liszt's arrangement of Schubert's compositions not included in the circle of song are—

(A) PIANOFORTE MUSIC.

I. *Transfers and Arrangements.*

Soirées de Vienne. Valses, Caprices d'après Fr. Schubert, No. 1-9. (Spina, Vienna, 1852-53.)

Divertissements à la Hongroise by Fr. Schubert (Op. 54), No. 1. Andante; No. 2. Marcia; No. 3. Allegretto. (Diabelli, Vienna, 1840.)

Marches by Fr. Schubert: No. 1. Frauer Marsch; No. 2. Marsch; No. 3. Reiter Marsch. (Also at Diabelli's, 1845.)

II. *Revisions and Arrangements.*

Fantasia, Op. 15.

Sonatas, Op. 42, 53, 78.

Waltzes and slow waltzes, Op. 9, 18, 33.

Valses sentimentales, Op. 50, 67, 92, 127.

Impromptus, Op. 90, 142.

Moments Musicaux, Op. 94. (J. G. Cotta, Stuttgart, 1869.)

Schubert's orchestral works and operas, the latter of which especially remained unknown. The former he introduced into the concert-hall at Weimar, as director of the band ; one of the latter he brought on the stage,¹ the first time this work had been performed.

The following collections of song-transfers followed, at different times, those already mentioned—

Geistliche Lieder, by Fr. Schubert,² Transferred to the Piano, &c.

1. Litanei.	2. Himmelsfunken.
3. Die Gestirne.	4. Hymne.

Six Songs by Franz Schubert,³ transferred to Piano, &c.

1. Lebewohl.	2. Des Mädchens Klage.
3. Das Sterbeglöcklein.	4. Trockene Blumen.
5. Ungeduld.	6. Die Forelle. ⁴

(B) ORCHESTRAL TRANSFERS.

Franz Schubert's Marches : No. 1. Vivace ; No. 2. Funeral March ; No. 3. Reitermarsch ; No. 4. Hungarian March. (A. Fürstner, in Berlin, 1871.)

(C) PIANOFORTE AND ORCHESTRA.

Franz Schubert's Grand Fantasia (Op. 5), arranged symphonically. (Schreiber, Vienna, 1857.)

¹ Weimar, 24th June, 1854, for the birthday of the reigning Grand Duke Karl Alexander.

² Julius Schuberth, Hamburg, afterwards J. Schuberth and Co., Leipsic, 1846.

³ M. Schlesinger, Berlin. The first edition was entitled "Six Melodies," 1846.

⁴ Spina, Vienna (afterwards Fr. Schreiber), a second edition of the "Forelle" appeared 1856.

Miller's Songs, by Fr. Schubert,¹ transferred in a lighter style.

1. Das Wandern.	2. Der Müller am Bach.
3. Der Jäger.	4. Die böse Farbe.
5. Wohin?	6. Ungeduld.

Schwanengesang by Fr. Schubert.²

1. Die Stadt.	2. Das Fischermädchen.
3. Aufenthalt.	4. Am Meer.
5. Abschied.	6. In der Ferne.
7. Ständchen.	8. Ihr Bild.
9. Frühlingssehnsucht.	10. Liebesbotschaft.
11. Der Atlas.	12. Der Doppelgänger.
13. Die Faubenpost.	14. Kriegers Ahnung.

Winterreise by Fr. Schubert.³

15. Gute Nacht.	16. Die Nebensonnen.
17. Muth.	18. Die Post.
19. Erstarrung.	20. Wasserflut.
21. Der Lindenbaum.	22. Der Leiermann und Täuschung.
23. Das Wirthshaus.	
24. Der Stürmische Morgen ; und Im Dorfe.	

These collections embrace four-and-twenty of Schubert's songs which Liszt transferred to the pianoforte, partly during his stay in Switzerland, partly during his European tour. But this did not suffice. These songs still echoed within him, and long afterwards, at the end of the Weimar period, in the winter of 1860-61, he again translated four of them, putting the pianoforte accompaniment into orchestral accompaniment ; and still ten years later, at the end

¹ Diabelli, Vienna, 1846.

² Haslinger, Vienna, 1840.

³ Haslinger, Vienna, 1841.

of the year 1870, in Pesth, he arranged in the same way, with the addition of a chorus for men's voices, the tenor song, "Die Allmacht, by Fr. Schubert, for a solo-tenor voice, with chorus and orchestra."¹

The first-mentioned songs were: "Vier Lieder, by Fr. Schubert, for one voice with small orchestra, arranged by, &c.² 1. Die junge Nonne; 2. Gretchen am Spinnrad; 3. Lied der Mignon; 4. Erlkönig."

Liszt has enriched the concert-hall with these five arrangements, and, what no doubt many have felt, has to a certain degree filled up the breach which lies between the sentiment of many of Schubert's songs and their pianoforte accompaniment; this is principally remarkable in the concert-room, where the voice is more broadly unfolded and soars in larger waves than in the *salon*. The sound and colouring of the pianoforte do not always conceal the voice in the concert-hall, and beside it the pianoforte accompaniment, in spite of its poetically characteristic delineation, appears almost barren: the colouring is wanting to the picture. Liszt's instrumentation has given it the effect without removing the framework of the song. The accompaniments are arranged only for "small

¹ J. Schuberth and Co., Leipsic, 1872.

² Rob. Forberg, Leipsic, 1871.

orchestras ; " but such is the richness of his instrumentation that the fulness of many a "great orchestra" is put to shame. Like the picturesque variation of the pianoforte transfers, it originates in the spirit of the translation, and surrounds the song with the breath of lofty poetic life, and with the colouring of sound which breathes from the words, the verse, the strophe.

The arrangement of the song "Die Allmacht," intended at the time for the Ofen Singing Academy is not less important. The addition of the man's chorus, with which Liszt "strengthened" (as he called this addition) this magnificent song, placed the contents on a higher basis, and assured them an effect it could never have reached without the choir and orchestra, though, according to Liszt, it is one of the noblest and most effective songs for tenor solo. The broad chord accompaniment which Schubert gave the song leads to a something which he has not expressed, while the conclusion of the song, with its ever-soaring exclamation, "Great is Jehovah the Lord!" is so full of sentiment that the unexpected termination, breaking off suddenly, leaves that vague feeling which always arises when the mind is deeply stirred but not satisfied. In Liszt's arrangement a chorus swells from the

broad chord accompaniment, and the exclamation of the individual, "Great is Jehovah the Lord!" melts into the powerful echo which it finds in the excited minds of a multitude—a wonderful "strengthening" of this affecting hymn.

"Die Allmacht" is the last of Schubert's songs which Liszt arranged, the only one to which he has made an addition. Schubert's songs have entered into all the important epochs of Liszt's intellectual life ; into the period of his virtuosoship, when he appeared as a symphonist, and again as a composer. Three of his mental periods have cast the abiding reflection of their splendour and loftiness upon these single strains. What a broad interior development from the "Rose" (1835) to the "Allmacht" (1870) !

Liszt has shown the most earnest sympathy as well as the fullest comprehension of the poetry of the German song ; it was a part of himself, though he was not born in the country. He understood its poetic fervour ; and a German has seldom penetrated as he has done into the very innermost secrets of the national soul. He has translated into pianoforte music many songs of the noblest representatives of German song — Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and others. He has followed each of these

masters in their most delicate and spiritual emotions, and preserved, understood, and retained in his transfers all their individual peculiarities, nay, often given them a higher beauty. But Schubert's songs are the pearls of the collection—pearls which he scattered from his inmost heart.

This portion of his career began with Liszt's concerts in Vienna, 1838, a career which has rejoiced the hearts of thousands, and will yet rejoice and delight the hearts of thousands more.

XXVII.

ROME.

[Travels with the Countess d'Agoult, 1835-40.]

Summer freshness. Concerts at the Duke of Modena's in Florence, Bologna, Rome. Remarkable concert in the halls of Prince Galitzin. Liszt's thoughts concerning the unity of art find their solution. The working out of his artistic individuality. T. A. D. Ingres. New materials. Liszt's "Sposalizio," and "Il Penseroso." The plastic arts in connection with music. Pianoforte scores of Beethoven's symphonies. First song composition. Compositions after his concert period in Vienna.

WHEN Liszt arrived in Venice, the Countess d'Agoult was already convalescent. The concert arrangements which had been broken off by his journey to Vienna were not resumed, but, as the summer season was approaching, they both left the city to exchange its sultry heat for the cooling breezes of a mountain lake. They had chosen Lugano, one of the most favoured summer residences of the *haut ton* of all nations. Their route lay through Milan to Genoa, where Liszt gave a concert ; thence they proceeded to

the mountains and to the lake, with its steep sinuous shores and picturesque beauty.

They remained here till the waning autumn warned the guests to seek the abodes of art, and to exchange the joys so richly lavished by the beauties of nature for those offered by art with a luxuriance never again at any time to be repeated.

Liszt had passed the summer in the usual way, living for his studies and for nature, yet not retired and solitary as in Bellagio, but in social intercourse with men of rank and talent. He made excursions from time to time; among others, the trip to Milan, to which allusion has already been made, and a journey worthy of remark into the province of Padua, whither he went at the invitation of the Duke of Modena, and, with his grand Erard piano, passed several days at the Duke's Villa, Catayo. These days in the ducal villa were gala times, for distinguished guests were there: the Imperial Austrian pair; the Vice-Queen of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, Elizabeth of Austria; the Archduchess Maria Louisa; the Archduke Franz, and the most distinguished members of the ducal family. With *them* Liszt sat at table; *they* with their retinue of Lord chamberlains, of court lords and ladies, were his only audience.

When the summer was passed, he, with the Countess d'Agoult, turned his steps towards the towns, and made longer or shorter stays in the different capitals of Italy, distinguished for their treasures of art. He appeared more as a private man than as a professional artist, yet, "not to forget his trade entirely," as he wrote to Berlioz, he came in contact with the artist world by giving concerts here and there. He played several times in Florence: on the 8th November in the theatre of the Englishman, Newland Standish, on the 17th November and on the 12th December at court, on the 16th December in the Teatro Cocomero; in Bologna, on the 25th December, in the Casino, on the 29th in the saloon of the Marchese Sampicci; in Rome, at the end of January, 1839, at a concert given by the singer Francilla Pixis, the adopted daughter of his friend Pixis; during the fast in many private circles of the aristocracy and of the artist world; on the 1st May at a service arranged by the French Embassy in the church of S. Luigi de' Francesi, where he executed a fugue of Sebastian Bach's on the organ. In the middle of May he gave a concert himself in the Teatro Argentina. His appearance was always attended with the most brilliant success, and everywhere his personality as an artist and as a man awakened admiration and enthusiasm.

One of Liszt's concerts in Rome has become historically remarkable. It took place in the Palazzo Poli, in the saloons of Prince Dmitsi Galitzin, governor of Moscow, but was arranged by the Russian Count Michael Wielhorsky. This concert, which Liszt gave to a highly exclusive and brilliant audience, consisting entirely of dignitaries of the European states and of the Church, and the families of the ambassadors living in Rome, was the first at which he appeared *without assistance, alone at the piano.*

No one before him had attempted a thing which presupposes so much that the boldest virtuoso either before his time or contemporary with him would scarcely have dreamed of such a rash experiment. For, independently of the rare amount of physical and mental endurance which it requires, it necessitates, to render the attempt either successful or indeed possible, a florid richness of fancy, a versatility of mind, and a power of discernment which were never united in the single individual. Without these qualities a concert, the programme of which consists entirely of pianoforte music, is impossible; and in any case to make the audience forget the monotony of the instrument is not an easy task. For though the pianoforte may follow every shade of the mind, it cannot render every shade of colouring, hence

arises a feeling of monotony and weariness even when the virtuoso is not only a musical hero of the finger, but a talented musician. With those qualities, however, the reproducing artist stands above his materials, and also above the defects of his instrument. By them he can distinguish the compositions of the most different categories, epochs, and minds, not only in their general nature, but also in their distinctive features ; they lend him the power of retaining what he already knows, and of representing it at all times purely and clearly, even when preceded or surrounded by the most opposite moods and forms ; by them he appropriates the hundredfold blossoms of other minds, and so inspires them with the characteristics of his own fancy that they appear to his hearers to germinate and bloom spontaneously. Before such a mind one-sidedness vanishes like a trifling incident of no material importance. It was left to Liszt to conceive the idea, to make the attempt, and to secure the victory. How was this thought born within him ? Was it the musical circumstances in Rome which constrained him to it ? Was it the necessity of freeing himself from the many chances, the self-will, the caprice, the hatefulness to which the virtuoso is exposed at every step in his preparations for a concert—the impulse to break

an unworthy yoke? Was it the proud, innate power of authority which wished to stand by itself? The artistic spirit that as regards the unfolding of its own powers feels itself hemmed in by the opposition and interference of immature natures? How can the origin of a thought be deciphered? One thing is certain, a deed presupposes a force, and Liszt felt his powers strong enough for the trial, as evidenced by the fact that the Roman concert in the halls of Prince Galitzin did carry to a victorious issue the bold conception of its originator.

This success was not without consequences; for Liszt did not stop at this one proof of his capacity to overcome all hindrances. He repeated the attempt countless times in his public concerts in all countries, and even in Paris in the year 1841; from this period, indeed, it became an honourable task of pianists to give pianoforte concerts without the help of other artists; yet the full solution was attached to the pinions of his genius. His pupils, especially Von Bülow and Tausig, as well as Anton Rubenstein,¹ who though not really his pupil, gathered much at his hands, have also given concerts during the last ten years with great success, the pro-

¹ One might also here mention Mortier de Fontaine, with his "historical" pianoforte concerts, were it not that his programme consisted of pre-classical pianoforte music.

grammes of which consisted entirely of piano-forte music, yet, with the exception of Rubenstein, whose natural power of composition overcame all difficulties, they have never made their hearers entirely forget the monotony of the pianoforte.

Liszt's stay in Italy lasted till towards the middle of November, Rome being the last town in which he appeared as a pianist. He and the countess had lived here four months —four months rich in the magnificent impressions which Rome, exalted above all cities through history and art, had given him. After that he visited Lucca, as a summer residence and to take the baths, occupying for the time of his stay the Villa Maximiliana; then he made a sojourn of several weeks, devoted to solitude, in the little fishing village of Pau Rossore, situated on the sea; finally, in the middle of November, he began to dedicate himself to art and to the world, and to exchange for a professional life the wandering existence into which the thirst for instruction and interior elaboration had as great a part as the circumstances into which his youthful passion had plunged him.

Among all the cities of Italy which Liszt visited, and among all the halls of art through which he had wandered, Rome chiefly pre-

served its eternal glory for him. The greatness and variety of the impressions which met him here surpassed all he had previously imbibed. The dreamy, gloomy seriousness of the lagoons of Venice, resounding with the melodies of the gondoliers, as with an eternal lullaby, yielded to the Campagna Romana with its silent majesty ; the twinkling sky that vaulted the Lago di Como grew pale before that overpowering something that spoke from the starlit splendour of the night that shone over the Campo Santo, the "Field of Death," and even Florence, "La Bella" of Italy, laid her flowers at the feet of the solitary palm that raises her proud free head on the ruins of former greatness before the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, the same in which the "Moses" of Michael Angelo to this hour fulfils his master's behest : "Now go and speak!"

Here in Rome all the impressions which nature, history, and the plastic arts had laid up in him during two years found their realization and their explanation—thoughts which had arisen within his heart at the sight of monumental works of art, sculptures, and paintings, seeming oftentimes to clash with his conceptions of music, now melted into unison and harmony. Here in Rome he found the practical solution to those problems of art which had occupied him when a

youth : in the audience hall of the orator, in the studio of the painter, and in the chamber of the philosopher, he learned the secret of the historical unity of all arts in their purest embodiment—in Rome he discovered the keystone of his individual development as an artist whose ideas are universal.

At that time, indeed, the world wondered much at Liszt's life in Italy, at his wanderings from the Po to the Tiber, at his long sojourn in Rome. They could not understand what was to be gained thereby as a musician and virtuoso, and were disposed to consider it all as a useless waste of time and strength. They knew nothing of the intellectual labour which went on under this apparent frivolity of purpose, and if they had seen it, would they have gauged it ? Scarcely ! The general understanding, which only comprehends the way of the utilitarian lying before its eyes, will hardly construe those unusual paths which genius instinctively treads in its search after itself. It shakes its head at the youth who lays aside his chisel to wander through the scores of great masters in music, or the poetic creations of immortal poets, and does not reflect that the tones will inspire the chisel and poetry guide the hand. Liszt's travels were incomprehensible to the world, especially after his great triumphs in Vienna, and the

musical press as spokesman affirmed that it would cost him greater sacrifices than it would bring him fame. Yet in the mean while, though perhaps with external playfulness, as above shown, he had worked at the formation of his mind with that earnestness and strength which are inseparable from genius. The musical conditions of Italy could offer him nothing, except the Sixtine Chapel in Rome, which for three hundred years has spoken in the Passion week through the lofty spirit of old Romish Church music to the hearts of the worshippers. He had therefore, as he wrote to Berlioz, "turned to the dead, demanding little from the living." Through their works of art they gave him an answer to the questions which he had never found in France, when studying the problems of time and of philosophy. In the antique, in the works of Michael Angelo, of Leonardo da Vinci, of Raphael, and other masters, he followed the traces of that spiritual connection which exists between the arts and unites them with the problems which were, and still are, though in other directions, the centre of the spiritual activity of the times. He thus rendered his glance more keen for the artistic mission of our times, he thus recognized the one tenour and the one striving through which plastic and poetic art, and with them music, have

to pass. From those works he read the great thought of unity, on whose broad path heaven, earth, art, and science move like battling stars, struggling after freedom and the divine, to find themselves finally united in the *One*.

Wheresoever he turned his eye—to nature, to the past, or to the present—creatress of the future—to the plastic arts or to poetry and music—it was ever the same, the *One thing*: the struggling after light, the wrestling for the solution of those problems which keep striving and thinking man in motion from the beginning of his existence, the purifying of the real to the ideal, the glorifying of the earth, the yearning for the divine—it was the key to all languages, which he found.

Michael Angelo's stormy mobility and lofty strength—a triumph of freedom and of convulsive divination at the same time!—spoke to him in sculpture as to the effervescence and the struggle for freedom of the human spirit, which in the course of centuries has impressed its furrows ever deeper and stronger into the hearts of nations—through which, indeed, he had lived in France, when he was engulfed so powerfully in its current. A deep sympathy drew Liszt to Michael Angelo, whose genius, with bold and strong flight, had soared above the traditions which stood in his way.

He felt himself moved with equal might and yet quite differently by the deep meditative spirit of Leonardo da Vinci, whose creations breathe in line and colour a spirit of reconciliation which only the mildness of the Christian religion knows. The clearness of delineation peculiar to the thinker, penetrated with an infinite fervour of sentiment, particularly as regards his female forms, into whom he has breathed a wonderful sweetness and purity of soul, lends harmony, perfection of form, and religious consecration to the creations of this master, affording to Liszt's contemplation a contrast to the striving and almost defiant element that affected him so overpoweringly in Michael Angelo's sculptures.

He was the most deeply touched by Raphael, that wonderful artist, thinker, and poet, who knew how to unite in the highest perfection Hellenic symmetry with the world-embracing largeness of Christianity. In Raphael's works the Sphinx is deciphered who in every century proposes new enigmas, bringing to the artists of our modern era the mission, to give the true united with the highest idea of progressive humanity as representing the beautiful. It was *ideas* that Liszt read from the works of "the dead to which he turned." A letter which the *Bachelier-ès-musique* addressed at that time to

his friend d'Ortigne in Paris, after he had seen Raphael's *St. Cecilia* in Bologna, shows how spiritually and deeply he comprehended such masterpieces, even in the foreign language of painting.¹ The materials belonging to both painting and music carried him, before this glorious conception, to an artistic intuition which points to the mysteries lying hid in the picture. Liszt was no momentarily excited observer. What he had seen affected him afterwards. Meditation—particularly before the works of Raphael—made him feel deeply the equilibrium which must exist between spirit and form, to enable a just fulfilment of true ideas; in the presence of those paintings he felt the penetrative unity of those two essential factors to that depth where form merges into contents and contents into form; where they not only breathe the spirit of peace, but raise the earthly into glorified spirituality.

Not only the plastic arts, the old Italian music also opened its treasures to Liszt, and particularly the scores of the lofty-style church music peculiar to the Sixtine Chapel in Rome, and executed there from time to time. Here he heard the sounds of Palestrina, Allegri, Vittoria, and other masters, in all their purity.

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii., Letter No. 11: *Die heilige Cäcilie von Rafael*.

The first mentioned, above all, was the object of his worship. The harmonies of that composer, so earnest and so lofty, so simple and yet so God-inspired, moved him like a message from heaven—and withal he had felt something akin in his own spirit. Yet no presage told him that one day, the world, with Pio Nono at its head, would call him the “modern Palestrina.”

Rome gave the close to all the impressions Liszt had received in Italy. He had here the good fortune to wander through the churches and the proud halls of the Vatican by the side of a highly educated, matured artist with the same ideas as himself, but already enlightened and cultivated. Here, where treasures of art are stored up which speak in eloquent language of the creative power and striving spirit of the nations of the East and of the West, of Paganism and of Christianity from the earliest times of civilization up to the most flourishing epochs of art ; here, and through an artist whose words, according to his own expression, he listened to like an eager scholar, his ideas awakened the most fully, fairly, and lofty. His cicerone was no other than Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, in his time a famous French historical painter, the champion of ideality, who had been obliged to yield to his opponents in France, and now, in succession to Horace Vernet, occu-

pied the position of Director of the French Academy in Rome. He had already gone through the schools of life and of art, and was eminent both as an artist and as a man, when a hearty sympathy brought him into connection with his younger companion, a sympathy all the more intelligent and ardent that Ingres was not only a painter standing on the heights of the world of thought, but also an excellent musician, handling the bow with artistic perfection. He belonged to those rare artists whose mental abilities and cultivation stand far above the narrow limits of their one profession. His glance penetrated into the mysteries of the beautiful, in whatever domain, or at whatever time it might reveal itself. "Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn spoke the same language to him," wrote Liszt to Berlioz, enthusiastically, after he had quitted Rome.¹ He expressed himself as follows, in the same letter, concerning the insight he had gained into art—

The beauty of this favoured region appeared before me in its purest and most lofty forms. Art stood before my astonished eyes in all its majesty, and revealed itself in all its universality, in all its unity. Each day confirmed, through feeling and thought, the consciousness of the secret relationship of all the works of creative spirit. Raphael and Michael Angelo helped me to understand Mozart and Beethoven; I found the explanation of Allegri, Marcello, Palestrina in John of Pisa, Fra Beato, and Francia; Titian and Rossini appeared to me as stars of the same

¹ Liszt's "Gesammelte Schriften," vol. ii., Letter No. 12.

refraction. The *Colosseum* and the *Campo Santo* are not so far from the *heroic symphony* and the *Requiem*. Dante has found artistic expression in Orgagno and Michael Angelo ; one day, perhaps, he will do the same in music through a *Beethoven of the future*.

Such ideas, originating in the feeling of the oneness of the spirit of the arts, did not remain in Liszt mere views of the philosophy of art. They had sprung from his innermost spirit, and, as his feeling for music was the centre, they were not separated from it, but flowed into it, finding spontaneous expression in his notes, in his conceptions at the piano, and his arrangements and compositions.

Two little pianoforte pieces which he composed at that time give especial proof of this, and show how lively within him, and how much a part of his music, were the idea and feeling that the different arts were intimately connected with each other. They are of especial worth in explaining Liszt's artistic individuality ; but independently of this importance, another idea meets us, so new that it demands our especial attention, though in another direction—that of æsthetics. One of these pieces of music bears the superscription, "Sposalizio," the other, "Il Pensero." The title-page of the former is adorned with an impression of the well-known picture of Raphael, the "Sposalizio ;" that of the latter with a copy of the Medicean statue of

Giuliano, duke de Nemours, chiselled by Michael Angelo, to which the Italians, on account of its character, which it excellently describes, gave the name of "Il Pensero" (the pensive man), or, "Il Pensiero" (thought). This juxtaposition of title and picture show, without the slightest doubt, that the composer wished to see his music pieces brought into connection with those works of plastic art ; they awaken the thought that here two works of plastic art were the occasion of two pieces of music, or else that between the latter and the former there is a certain spiritual connection ; that here the same hand is stretched out towards two arts which are opposed to each other in their very foundations.

One asks in astonishment, How can a picture or a statue penetrate into melody and harmony ? How can they become translated to music, since the latter in all its elements belongs only to the spiritual senses ? How can this be, especially where the character, as in those two, is figure and grouping ; both founded on space, and both intelligible by the eye ? Shall tones delineate the holy ceremony of marriage, the statue of the "Pensive." Can space be converted into time ? the eye transported to the ear ? Can the senses exchange their organs ? or does a single sense bear a twofold power ? These

are questions which have long since ceased to be perplexing and the source of embarrassment ; or, rather, they have found their fairest answer in the mouth of the poet, though not in reference to music. Goethe wrote from Rome his words of the "feeling eye" and the "seeing hand," and in Rome Liszt found, but musically, what the poet had felt : the hearing eye and the seeing heart. Liszt's "*Sposalizio*" does not describe the group of Joseph and Mary's espousals ; his "*Penseroso*" is no statue ; his titles are neither arbitrary nor casual ; but he draws in the other art where it is purely spiritual ; where space melts into time ; where the floating colour shows the sphere of tone ; where the spiritual entrance of the sister art is completed in music—in feeling, in their mutuality of soul. His "*Sposalizio*" is a Raphaelistic musical composition in colouring and mood, and even the drawing bears that high simplicity which brings the earnest line of beauty of the great master so near to the lofty.

Listz expresses the holy general feeling of the picture by the *Thema*, the melodious measures of which move exclusively on the same diatonic foundation, lending the stamp of holiness and loftiness to the old Romish songs. Liszt has preserved this foundation throughout

in his "Sposalizio," and thereby given it an historical biblical colouring. The ethereal hues which surround Raphael's pictures as with a saintly halo, in Liszt's harmonies become, through their foundation, illuminated sounds. The landscape, remaining undeveloped in the background of Raphael's composition—an unexpressed pastoral revealing itself through the feeling—is converted by Liszt into a pastoral movement. And the temple which, in the picture of the Italian master, stands high above the group assembled for the holy ceremony, and almost covers the background, as if it would show by its broad dimensions that the house of the Lord is the protector, the guardian, the giver of blessings, in the music melts into religious sentiment, swelling to a broad song of consecration, which spreads over the sacred theme, and merges into ornamental passages. Just as the temple appears above the scene, and the divine symbol of the Infinite, apart from the group which represents life, comprising the biblical pair, the high priest, the men and women, and the youth breaking his wand of hope as the maid pronounces her vow, so here the music expresses one ever mighty, upstriving, holy mood of faith, in which the woe and the joy, the promise, hope, and renunciation of life, give up their separate

existence. As in Raphael's picture so in Liszt, the colouring of the Catholic Church is spread over the foreground, but also unbroken faith and an unchangeable frame of mind.

In the same way as Liszt's "Sposalizio" is attached to the ideas and sentiment given by Raphael, and translates it into music without being a copy of the picture in musical notes, so his "Il Pensero" is no musical imitation of Michael Angelo's Medicean statue, christened by the Italians with that name;¹ the idea which the marble masterpiece expressed—Il Pensero is translated into music, as in the former piece, its "hearing eye" and the "seeing touch." Liszt attaches himself principally to the general spiritual character of the sculpture.

The calm demeanour, expressive of deep meditation and entire forgetfulness of self, with which the Italian master has, as it were, bound his statue to "thought:" the noble posture,

¹ The statue of Giuliano, mistaken for nearly three hundred years for his brother's, Lorenzo, duke of Urbino, is in the mausoleum of the Medici, in the church of St. Lorenzo, at Florence. The verse hewn into the socket of the statue by Michael Angelo has no direct reference to the Duke de Nemours himself, nor to the character of the statue. It is the answer to a piece of flattery which the poet Giovanbatista Strozzi addressed to him concerning the allegorical figure belonging to the Medicean monument, viz., "La Notti;" but it is veiled in the gloomy mood which the fall of the old Mediceans had called up in Michael Angelo.

powerful with life, and yet upheld by a spiritual might which penetrates every line and animates it with rhythmical power, without impelling to that moment when action begins—all this Liszt has expressed in the deeper regions of tone, by chords of a manly, noble, and even lofty character. Calmly—the measure of the piece is *lento*—in equal divisions of time, powerful in their sequences, they reveal the self-collection distinguishing the thinker, the foundation of his frame of mind. At the same time he spreads over it a sharply accentuated organ-point, whose rhythms, as it were, strained by the muscular power of thought, give movement to the piece, and at the same time preserve its character, as the beatings of the heart mark and decide the state of the soul. As the brow, heavy with thought, that Michael Angelo has given to his “Pensero” shows clearly enough that no fanciful poetic nursing lies behind, no dream dissolves the feeling, so Liszt calls the same expression into his tones by retaining the firm, rhythmical movement of the organ-point, and the broad, earnest harmonies, severely logical, are weakened by no single tone.

In both works—in the sculptor's and in the musician's—there lies a thoroughly calm and constant seriousness, but the tones express it better than the stone; and even if posterity had

been ignorant of the lot of Giuliano, the last of the old Mediceans, over whose head there lay a heavy doom, Liszt's tones would relate that a human destiny, weighed down by the heavy hand of fate, had the greatest part in the "Penseroso." Michael Angelo's statue is not alone noble but also manly, and so there starts through Liszt's harmonies a bitter sorrow ; but the heart neither stands still nor trembles. The "thought" prevails continuously, a *basso continuo* speaks of the deeply meditative emotion which at last becomes religious feeling ; but even this is under the governance of thought ; the flight is not free, but there is no expression of decay. It re-echoes in the musing which again takes up the foreground and sinks back, earnest as it began, into the manly breast.

Liszt's "Il Penseroso," consisting only of forty-eight bars, takes its place among the deepest and most valuable productions in the department of pianoforte music.

With these two pieces of music—the "Sposalizio" and the "Penseroso"—Liszt has practically represented the idea of the relationship existing between the arts, as it dawned upon him in Italy ; but the manner in which he has rendered into music these materials belonging to plastic art goes further than specific individuality. With them Liszt has trodden a domain

until then alien to instrumental music, and has shown that it can draw from every department of art which bears lofty ideas, if only it lays its spiritual ear where the soul of ideas has its seat. This view may, indeed, be disputed by many who object that the source of instrumental music is to be found alone and exclusively in feeling. That is both true and untrue. It will always depend upon whether the whole æsthetic circle of feeling is meant, or only that which moves in the circle of the unknown. It is certain that there are feelings which are more than subjective affections, feelings which become living only through ideas and grow from them, and therefore can only be comprehended by ideas—the domain of feeling which our modern music began to tread in the person of Beethoven. Whether these ideas came to the composer from history, religion, nature, time, or poetry ; from painting, sculpture, or architecture, is indifferent as regards the fact that music must have feeling as its forgoer, but it is not indifferent—and here is the essential advantage for music—that this circle of feeling works on characteristics and the giving of musical form, whereby it becomes wider.

Liszt has often since trod the same path as in his "Sposalizio" and "Il Penseroso ;" as, for instance, in his great symphonetic composition,

“The Battle of the Huns,” originating in Kaulbach’s picture of the same name; his “March of the Three Kings” in his oratorio of “Christus,” inspired by a picture in the cathedral of Cologne, representing the homage of the three kings; and, finally, his “Seven Sacraments,” the first impulse to which was given by Overbeck’s cycle of pictures bearing the same name. Those two pianoforte compositions, then, are not mere vague echoes such as float in the human mind after serious impressions. They are something more. They are “creative genius” in the soil of musical ideas and formation. As Hector Berlioz added great treasures to instrumental music by annexing it to poetry, so Liszt has shown the way to the enlargement of musical materials in another direction. The copies of the two pictures of Raphael and Michael Angelo which he has added to his compositions are neither more nor less than a programme without words.

Liszt was not particularly ostentatious with his discovery, nor did he seem at all conscious that instrumental music would find new ways through him. He only published these works during his Weimar period, in his “Italienischen Wander-Album,” and until now they have passed unremarked by the musical world, and this is easy to understand, as they are short -

pieces without any display, and offer little to an ear schooled in conservatism—nay even pass for only sketches. Their soul lies in the idea that first uncloses the piece, and brings forth its spiritual worth in those few tones for which one seeks in vain in those pompous-sounding *morceaux*, generally so liked by critics and pianoforte players.

The last key to his individuality as an artist is to be sought in the spiritual fulness, loftiness, and breadth of these pieces. And here—if we presuppose his strong discernment of the hand of God—his hot temperament; both of which, true lava streams of religious feeling, coursed through his artistic thoughts and sentiments—we find the full explanation of the beaming, magnificent, and universal in his nature; in a word, what bore him as a man and as an artist above all the spheres of ordinary life, and led him to follow aims which the general consciousness, ever limping behind genius, cannot always nor directly follow, especially where it seeks to produce that form of art which is adequate to its individual thought and feeling. Without Liszt's wanderings through the art saloons of Italy, and especially without his sojourn in Rome, the key-stone would have been wanting to the perfecting of his mind, and it is unquestionable that the new circle which he afterwards drew

round musical art would have remained undescribed.

Music vibrated under cover of all his art studies in Italy. Raphael and Michael Angelo, according to his own words, helped him to understand Mozart and Beethoven. Beethoven! As he stood before the bold and lofty creations of Michael Angelo, they revealed to him those prophetic words which the German master had confided to his tones. The Italian museums had not made Liszt forget his Meister's scores. They had wandered with him to Italy, and he here continued the work which he had begun in Geneva and carried on in Rohant—the transfer of the symphonies to the piano. It is clear that they were not only important for his artistic ideas, but also entered into his purely musical thought and feeling, for they were undertaken and completed at a period when his own individual formation was striking its final chord. For while, with the intuition of genius, he examined Beethoven's scores musically and critically, he lived through the history of their creation to the smallest detail, and while he re-created them on the piano, he took part in them, and thus passed through a mental-musical school in the genesis of these artistically organic productions, which—though in another way—calmed down the fermenting Romanticism of his

youthful years as much as the spiritual plunging into the imperishable masterpieces of the great Italian sculptors and painters. They opened to him that historic vein which united the genius of Beethoven with our century.

Liszt finished his pianoforte scores of Beethoven's symphonies at that time, but did not publish them all at once, or at one time. We shall return to this in another chapter.

Liszt's principal musical expressions after the Viennese concert epoch are comprised in these pianoforte scores, in the two pianoforte pieces of his Italian "Album de Voyage" and in a song composition yet to be spoken of. This latter, composed in the summer of 1839 (the text by the Marquis Cesare Bocelli), is the sweet and charming tenor song, "Angiolin dal biondo crin," in which he expresses his love for his little fair-haired Blondine with touching fervid poetry—rather a poem, a piece of real life, than a composition. Peter Cornelius, composer and poet, has translated the words into German—

Englein hold im Lockengold
Das zwei Lenze sah entschweben,
Rein und heiter sei Dein Leben.

Englein hold im Lockengold
Du der Blume schönes Bild.

Zephir mögen Dich umkosen
Helle strahlen Dich umkränzen,
Sterne freundlich Dir erglänzen.
Englein hold, etc.

Wenn du schlummerst, wehet sanft
Liebesauch aus Deinem Munde
Ahnet keines Leides Wunde.
Englein hold, etc.

Süsse Wonne, reines Glück
Aus der Mutter Lächeln sauge—
Ihr ein Himmel sei dein Auge.
Englein hold, etc.

Lern' von ihr den holden Zauber,
Wie Natur und Kunst ihn übet :
Nie erfahr', wie leid betrübet.
Englein hold, etc.

Hörst Du meinen Namen nennen :
Mög' er oft vom Mund Dir klingen,
Tief ins Herz der Mutter dringen.
Englein hold im Lockengold,
Du der Blume schönes Bild.

Liszt's music has spread an indescribable mingling of devotion, love, and playfulness over these verses. Every tone poured forth his inmost soul—no fleeting poetic mood, but an expression of his very self.

This song is not less valuable in a purely musical, and in a biographically musical point of view. *It is the first song that Liszt composed;* and at the same time a masterly creation of original stamp. As it was produced in Italy, the land of absolute melody, and at a period to which his numerous transfers of Italian drawing-room airs belong, one might suppose it to be essentially connected with Italian music in senti-

ment and expression ; but this is not the case. It has, indeed, unmistakeable touches of that school, but only such as lie in its peculiar beauty, in the harmony and southern softness of tone and colouring, which melt into the soul. In its fundamental conception it belongs to the spirit of the German song, as we owe it to Franz Schubert, who, with the exception of his predecessor Beethoven, had been till then the only path-finding composer of songs.

Franz Schubert, with his melodious adaptation to the poetry of the words, had sunk deep into Liszt's heart. The structure and arrangement of the melody of the song "Angiolin" is allied, as in Schubert, to the rhyme and the verse—in both Schubert and him they give the form. His melody won thereby a pleasing transparency of form and equilibrium of time—the latter particularly a quality which appears to be lost to the musical song of the present day, yet lies in the character of the song as the rhythm in the nature of music. Liszt's "Angiolin" was *one* with the words and yet *all* music, like Schubert's songs. But already in his first song he passed beyond them in poetic unity between word and tone. The poetical contents of the composition are much fuller than in Schubert, and this does not arise solely from the infinitely rich and variously developed in-

dividuality of Liszt, whose spirit bore far other poetic reflections than the Viennese composer's, but also in a larger treatment, less as regards the melody than the accompaniment of the song. Schubert had created the *characteristic accompaniment* by compositions such as the "Erlkönig," "Gretchen am Spinnrad," and others. The lugubrious *octavo tremolo* of the "Erlkönig" accompaniment, and the whirring spinning-wheel of "Gretchen" have become historical themes of characteristic accompaniment; but the monotony of the strophic form principally employed by Schubert clings more or less to all the accompanying parts of his songs.

Liszt has also taken the strophic form for the foundation of his song "Angiolin," his accompaniment too tends towards the characteristic; but by the repetition of the melody and accompaniments with variations, and by a judicious change of key and modulation, which lay in the character and nature of the words and sentiments, he has not alone avoided monotony, but has brought the strophic form itself, without changing the type of the song, into a stream of soul-full and poetic movement and elevation. These variations move in the same circle as that of his song transfers, spoken of in the last chapter, but are much freer in invention and

movement as they are not impeded by a previous composition. As in Schubert, an essential task falls to the accompaniment, and, like the whole song, it is characteristically given. Liszt has composed it in the manner of a cradle song. Both the melody and the accompaniment bear this impress. Both have a swinging, rocking movement, and through both there runs whispering, fondling, singing—an elegiac tone, trembling with unconscious prayer. At each new strophe the accompaniment, still retaining the primitive character of the song, takes another turn, or more properly, flows into another. The whole song thus receives a psychological elevation which the strophic form of song cannot attain by itself.

Another quality, an individual originality, also meets us in this first song of Liszt's. The accompaniment is rocking. The swinging rhythm goes through the whole composition, but it is no imitation of a real cradle set in movement, as in the spinning-wheel with its whirring, where even the regular tread of the foot keeping it in movement is received into the musical picture: everything real is spiritualized, freed as it were from corporeal chains, transplanted to a higher sphere. And this is one of the points which, in common with many other later songs, has prevented its wide

popularity—their character is of too aesthetic a nature to be felt by average men, and only exceptional singers could render them with enough *soul*.

Like other compositions, this song also lay several years in the composer's portfolio. Then in the course of time there came several editions. It first appeared in a collection of songs: "Buch der Lieder"¹ by Liszt. Here it is in the key of A sharp, and the German translation of the poetry is by the Rhenish poet Philipp Kaufman. Later, when Liszt published his vocal compositions, then became very numerous, with the title, "Gesammelte Lieder"² it was inserted twice in this collection, in the keys of A and F sharp—the former being for tenor the latter for baritone, and each time with some alteration. The German text is here by Peter Cornelius.

We have now named Liszt's *essential* compositions and his labours in reference to them during those years. His wandering life was opposed to that condensation of strength necessary for works of great dimensions. Nevertheless, several sketches of original compositions, as well as transfers and arrangements of motives, themes, and songs of Italian

¹ M. Schlesinger in Berlin, 1842.

² C. F. Kahnt, Leipsic, 1861.

masters belong to his Italian period, and these, in spite of their small *genre*, will lay claim to immortality. We now proceed to mention them. They were partly inspirations of the moment, partly tokens of courtesy, and Liszt only published those that related to the latter; the others, at least in their present form, first appeared during his Weimar period.

Four numbers of the latter were inserted in his Italian "Album de Voyage,"¹ and are to be spoken of here. They too, though in a different way than the "Sposalizio" and "Il Penseroso," are connected with the artistic spirits of Italy. Neither Raphael nor Michael Angelo gave the poetic and musical motive to these, but Petrarca and Salvator Rosa: as regards the former, the sonnets to Laura, the incomparably beautiful apotheosis of love, so delighted Liszt that it led him to render them in music; while the famous painter (of whom they said that the

¹ Liszt's "Années de Pélerinage en Italie" consists of seven numbers—

- No. 1. Sposalizio.
- „ 2. Il Penseroso.
- „ 3. Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa.
- „ 4. Tre Sonetti di Petrarca. No. 47.
- „ 5. „ „ „ No. 104.
- „ 6. „ „ „ No. 123.
- „ 7. Fantaisie quasi Sonata, après une lecture de Dante.

The Tre Sonetti were published 1846-47 by Haslinger. The whole edition in 1838 by Schott's sons.

passionate colours of his pencil owed more to the romantic bandit-life than to studies in his *atelier*) incited him to arrange a Canzonetta for the pianoforte ; for Salvator Rosa was not only an artist and a popular poet in his day, he was a sort of naturalistic poet-musician, and gave to his poesy fitting melodies. Several of these lived in the mouth of the people ; one of them, set to the words,

“Vado ben spesso cangiando loco
Ma non so mai cangiari desio, &c.,”

Liszt arranged for the pianoforte—a charming little piece, popular and full of fresh, bold, original life ! In the Italian “Album de Voyage” it bears the title, “Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa.”

Three of Petrarch’s sonnets—Nos. 47, 104, 123—which Liszt began to compose at that time for *one voice, with pianoforte accompaniment*, remained at the time mere fleeting sketches, which he both finished and transferred to the piano several years afterwards—1846. Both editions appeared anterior to the Italian Album, under the title, “Tre Sonetti di Petrarca,” &c. when Liszt again laid the artistic knife, which had meanwhile become sharper, both to the pianoforte transfer and to the Canzonetta of Salvator Rosa, and published all the pieces under the above-named general title. It is not

the impressions made by natural objects which stand behind this Italian Album, as was the case with regard to the Swiss Album, but the noblest spirits of Italy, "Raphael, Michael Angelo, Salvator Rosa, Petrarca, and Dante."

A less valuable collection of pianoforte pieces, but also originating in Italy, and revised, completed, and published during the Weimar period, are the three pieces: "Venezia e Napoli,"¹ "Gondoliera," "Canzone e Tarantelle"—well-sounding and ingenious drawing-room *morceaux*, into which Venetian and Neapolitan airs are woven.

While these compositions reposed about fifteen years in Liszt's portfolio, the following two collections, one on a motive by Mercadante, the other on themes by Donizetti, were published immediately after they were written. The first, containing *six* numbers, appeared under the title, "Soirées Italiennes."² Six amusements sur des motifs de Mercadante, &c.; the second, containing *three* numbers, with the title: "Nuits d'Été à Pausillipe."³ Trois amusements sur des motifs de l'Album de Donizetti." A former biographer⁴ says justly of these two,

¹ 1861, Schott's Sons.

² 1838, Ricordi, Milan, and Schott's sons, Mayence.

³ 1839, Ricordi, Milan, and Schott's sons, Mayence.

⁴ Christiern's "Franz Liszt." Hamburg, Jul. Schuberth and Co. 1841.

and of the Rossini Album, that they wear the purity and clearness of the Italian nature, and classical repose breathes through them. The occasion and period of their origin is easily to be deciphered from the dedications they bear. The Mercadante Album is a token of homage from Liszt to the vice-queen of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, Elizabeth of Austria, and the Donizetti Album to the Marchioness Sophie di Medici. The court of the Grand Duke at Florence stands in the back-ground of the latter; through the former we see the villa of the Duke of Modena.

We here close the circle of Liszt's composition labours belonging to the Italian soil. They bear an ever-deepening stamp of genuine ripeness, and announce such a masterly command of means and so spiritualized and thoroughly original an employment of them, that the years of apprenticeship may be said to finish with them. Henceforth we shall find him a master.

The Liszt who left Italy was another than he who entered it, and in November he wrote to the Count Leo Fistetics: "Je vous arriverai un peu plus vieilli, plus muri, et permettez-moi de le dire, plus *ausgearbeitet als Kunstler* (more complete as an artist) que vous ne m'avez connu l'année dernière, car j'ai énormément travaillé depuis ce temps en Italie."

XXVIII.

DEPARTURE FROM ITALY.

[End of the period of travel with the Countess d'Agoult. 1835-40.]

Conclusions for the future concerning his artistic and personal duties. Hesitates between the choice of virtuosoship, or the leadership of a musical corps. Chooses the former. His position with regard to the Countess d'Agoult. His separation from her, principally on account of his concert tours. Both leave Rome for Lucca. Liszt guarantees the erection of a Beethoven monument in Bonn. San Rossore. Rest and self-collection. Departure from Italy.

IN June, 1839, Liszt left Rome with the Countess d'Agoult, but not with that heavy heart one would suppose after the many magnificent impressions he had here received.

Although the treasures of art of the chosen city, his own success, and his hearty and intimate friendship with Ingres must have been precious to him, they were at that time scarcely more than the necessary counterbalance to the heavy hours and interior excitement of his private life. Liszt's dwelling, situated in the Via della Purificazione, had but few plea-

sant recollections for him ; nay, they were such that for a long time a bitter feeling arose within him at the mention of Rome. And when he departed from Lucca, he travelled not only as the Countess's cavalier, who there sought a perfect recovery after the birth of a son, but his own health, too, required restoring.

But many a decision had come to ripeness in Rome. Until then his activity had never been turned decisively to any one artistic direction. Hitherto himself and his own education had been the centre of his aspiration, and now that this was reached, his artistic consciousness could no longer bear a life with no other than personal aims. It had ever been his conviction that the artist has higher tasks to fulfil than to live for himself and his own personal connections, and the power of circumstances alone had kept him so long from the fulfilment of his artistic calling. The impulse for other intellectual instruction than that which lay in an exclusively professional vocation, had expressed itself strongly, and the charm of his situation had retained him almost five years in private life, from which he only broke forth occasionally like a meteor, to disappear again as quickly from the eyes of the world ; yet these circumstances were only temporary, and could not long continue. He had long yearned for an

activity which would take the discontent of indecision from his soul, and lead him to the goal of his inner artistic impulses. But the bonds which were wound around him had become chains which hemmed him in on many sides. Now, however, the time had come when his genius moved too mightily within him for him to hold back from his duties as an artist, and on the other hand human duties raised their voices so decisively that he dared not trust himself longer to chance. But he was long undecided as to the path he had to tread. Two practical ones stood open: that of the virtuoso, and that of bandmaster.

Liszt's feelings as to the career of a virtuoso were quite divided. Though he recognized the proud divine spell cast around such a path, he was not blind to its spiritual misery. The consciousness that the multitude only require a transitory pleasure from the artist, and no earnest ministry of the noble revelations of art, had made him weep, when a youth, at what they called his "success," and in his bitterness he called the virtuoso "the dog Munito;" for in his own soul he acknowledged the high priesthood of art. Though milder and juster spirits had entered him, and he had become "tamer," he felt nevertheless bitterly enough, and especially before such a public as the Milanese, that

slavish chain which a dull-souled public, incapable of following the lofty flight of genius, binds around the heart of the virtuoso. Though it could not fetter the power of inborn ideals, yet the pain of that consciousness weighed heavily on his soul.

I do not deny it (Liszt wrote to Paris, during his Italian period), there is an inexplicably powerful charm, a proud and yet, I might almost say, a gentle violence in the exercise of any mental gift which turns towards us the darts of others, which casts into the souls of others sparks of that same holy fire which consumes our own soul, sparks which, with irresistible sympathy, raise us to the regions of the beautiful, the ideal, the divine. This effect which the artist exercises on individuals is sometimes transferred to the masses—then he feels himself king of all these spirits, feels the divine flame of creative power—then his tones produce excitement, feeling, thoughts. It is only a dream ; yes, but a dream which enables the existence of the virtuoso.¹

The career of a virtuoso brought him such bitter hours that the yearning to pass his life in unconsecrated solitude boiled up within him. The virtuoso career was not altogether the choice of his heart. To stand at the head of an orchestra as leader, and to realize the symphonetic works of our masters as they were mirrored in his spirit, this lot appeared to him preferable to the other. An occupation at one of the smaller German courts, whose art-loving princes, like the Medicean protectors of the

¹ Letter to Massard.

plastic arts, were Mæcenases of music, appeared to him especially desirable. These court bands did not suffer in their artistic strivings under the deadening caprices of the public, with its hundred-headed wishes, and its trivial and yet difficult taste. Artistic plans could here unfold themselves to pure artistic blossom, and the Kapellmeister, without anxiety as to the question of external existence, could develop into a composer after the precepts of his own genius. The remembrance of the musical corps in Eisenstadt, of Joseph Haydn and his noble protector, Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy, was still vivid within him. The musical court of Eisenstadt had been his father's ideal, and it had been inherited by himself. The little ruling princely houses of Germany, with their quiet and yet powerful musical patronage, seemed to him more or less like musical courts of the Muses, as the little Hungarian residence towns had been for many generations—only a Haydn was wanting to them. And, strangely enough, of all the princely German houses, none appeared to him, the musician, more attractive than the little residence on the Ilm, whose period of poetic splendour had placed it, through Goethe and Schiller, above all the royal and imperial courts as a dwelling of art, while leaving it barren in the domain of music. And yet an

inexplicable something drew him thither as though he must find there what he sought. When, in 1837, Hummel died, and thus the place of Court Kapellmeister in Weimar became vacant, he felt strongly inclined to sue for it, but the fetters which bound him prevented this. And if a position had now been offered him which corresponded to his artistic requirements, he would have been obliged to sacrifice it to his personal duties, for he had not only to fulfil his filial duties towards his beloved mother, but those, too, which were the consequence of his union with the woman who had so violently intruded herself on him. Three children, two girls and the boy Daniel, born in Rome, bore his name--to the filial were added the paternal duties. He had also to satisfy the necessities of the Countess. A place as Kapellmeister, even at a court, with its meagre salary, would never have sufficed to meet these numerous responsibilities. His children had been legitimized immediately after their birth, and, as formerly, after his father's death, the strong feelings of nature had impelled him to think, before all things, of his mother; so his feelings of duty decided him to elect the career of a virtuoso. Not one of them should suffer from the unhappy circumstances under which he began to writhe; no one should reproach him for duties neglected.

Natural feeling, pride, honour, and still more the mighty demands of affection, drove him to where he could procure the means of affording his children a sound and useful education.

This decision was not yet mature when Liszt came back from Vienna to Italy. The eastern journey planned in Switzerland had not yet been effaced from his travelling arrangements; but a short time sufficed to ripen his determination of abandoning his private life and of making a concert tour through Europe. His great success in Vienna had helped to hasten this decision, as well as his artistic necessities and human duties, and not less the ever more and more insupportable connection with the Countess d'Agoult. Circumstances alone had kept him in Italy till the autumn of 1839.

Now that he was leaving Rome, he was firmly decided to separate from the countess. What had yet remained of his youthful delusion when he first trod the Italian soil had meanwhile entirely vanished, and veil after veil had fallen from his eyes. The Countess d'Agoult, however, had remained the same. She had not attained to higher knowledge, and the confusion of her soul was not unravelled. Romanticism and false ambition still wound their chains about her, and time had not been able to clear her views, and raise her sentiments above herself.

She still lived with the delusion that she must be Liszt's Muse, and shine as such before the world. She wished to guide the famous artist and command his inspiration—an occasion of many violent scenes between them, in which Liszt with keen irony refused her idle wish and her endeavour to interfere with his artistic thoughts and doings.

Louis de Rouchaud, the young muse-seeking poet, was present at one of these scenes.

"She is right!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically, turning towards Liszt; "she is right! *we* should bend; only the woman ennobles the man. Think of Dante and Beatrice! think how the divine poet listened to her words as to revelations! *Thou* Dante—*she* Beatrice." "Bah Dante! Bah Beatrice!" Liszt interrupted violently. "The Dantes create the Beatrices, the genuine die when they are eighteen years old!"¹

The Countess d'Agoult did not perceive the way she had to take: that where love lives self-love is dead. Genuine love knows no egotistical waiting and wishing. Here lies the test of truth and delusion, the inexorable judge of fantastic self-deceiving and selfish will. The

¹ One of the letters (No. 6) of the Bachélier to Louis de Rouchaud refers to this scene in a part where Liszt speaks of women and their mission

woman who is chosen by fate to be the Muse or the protecting spirit of genius should never forget that the mental organization of the latter rises above all that is personal—even above love itself if it stand in his way. Spiritual and not personal interests are the aim of his mission, and the personal can only be of lofty and abiding worth when it ranges itself with and subordinates itself to the idea to which genius is constrained by nature.

The loving wife must often sow tears that the nation may reap pearls. It has been said that the heaviest lot that can befall a woman is to wear the thorny crown of genius. It seems still heavier to be bound in love to a genius. A blessing and a curse hovers at once over the woman's head. The balance of history is not weighed down with the light roses the heart has scattered, and the halo with which posterity loves to surround the love of poetic and artistic genius is only assured to those whose purity of heart and intuition of love conceals the knowledge of it as a heavenly secret, whose noble nature impels the passion inborn to genius towards true beauty, whose lofty mind spurs him on to noble poesy, be it in word, or tone, or colour. Their mission is no play, but a holy, inner consecration, a self-devoting love. Unselfish, yet without losing itself; free from

requirement, yet ever ready to sacrifice ; conscientious in her mission and strong enough to bear it—thus the love of a woman is a blessing to the artistic genius, which abides through all time. For History demands not tears, seeks not roses, but asks what love has brought to the poet, if it have led him nearer to his genius ; if it have removed him from it ? Here lie the blessing and the curse which hover above the woman who dares to enter into the circle of genius ; here bloom the undying flowers with which posterity adorns the image of those women, from generation to generation, who have been called in life the chosen ones of its mental favourites.

The Countess d'Agoult was not the woman for such a mission, and when Liszt left Rome with the determination to make a concert tour through Europe, he saw, independently of all things else, that it would be necessary to separate from her. The countess, whose mind was bent on travelling at the side of a man who was in constant intercourse with men of wit, elegance, and rank, would not, of course, see the necessity of this ; but Liszt's fine feeling of tact would not consent to her accompanying him. He persuaded her to go back to Paris, and as her family connections were sundered, to live with his mother till he should come to

Paris. He had no intention of breaking with the countess or of abandoning her. She was the mother of his children—another reason in his eyes for his caring for and protecting her. Although manifold experience had taught him that the idea of faithfulness in love, as preached by the Romanticists, was seldom carried into practice, he still believed himself bound to her as a husband. This magnanimity may perhaps appear to sober views a piece of affectation not unlike a masterly worked-out romance of George Sand, and yet it had nothing to do with the sickly appearances of magnanimity with which the French authoress is so fond of adorning her heroes. It was his really great nature and his strongly stamped feeling in regard to his family duties which induced him to act thus. His sense of justice, too, made him feel his situation as the consequence of a former error, which he had to take on himself as a man without further question.

Dearest of all to his heart were his children, and he had only been driven by necessity to follow the French custom of sending them to foster mothers in the country immediately after their birth. Now he wished to unite them in his mother's house at Paris. Nowhere would they be better cared for than there.

This plan was to be put into execution in the

autumn at the beginning of his concert tours, and Madame la Comtesse and the children, under the safe escort of a tried couple of servants, were to travel to Madame Liszt at Paris.

All these plans and decisions heaped bitterness on bitterness ; and when he now travelled with the countess to Lucca, he was glad to leave Rome behind him, and, as he hoped, to see peace before him. He longed for hours and days of calm. But Lucca was too much frequented and too elegant a bathing-place for him to find repose there ; besides he was too famous and too extraordinary a personage for the Lucca bathing-world not to do everything to draw him into their circle. A deep longing for solitude came over him, and as soon as the necessary time of his stay in Lucca was past he fled to the sea-shore to a little port where he could breathe safe from the great world. But before he had left Lucca to exchange the elegant Villa Maximilian for a fisherman's hut, his name echoed from Italy out into the wide world, not as a pianist, not as a creative artist, but as wearing a laurel crown for the magnanimity of his nature—a crown not less fading than the diadems of glory which his genius had brought him.

Liszt had for some time followed with intense interest the notices of the press concerning the

erection of a monument for Beethoven in his birthplace, Bonn.

A committee had been formed in this town, consisting of art-loving and patriotic men who had sent out an appeal to the concert institutions, amateurs and artists both at home and abroad, to contribute to the best of their power towards the erection of a monument to the great master in his native town. This was to be carried out in a splendid style worthy of Beethoven. The appeal was widely spread, and found universal, and amongst his worshippers enthusiastic, assent; but it was an error to believe that the love for Beethoven's music had penetrated so deeply and universally as to render the donations sufficient for the erection of a monument. The money flowed in neither so quickly nor so abundantly as one had a right to expect. Then Liszt read one day that although the subscription had been open for some years the capital was altogether inadequate to realize the proposed idea; that towns from whose sense of art and veneration for the great masters of music much had been expected only imparted sparingly, nay, contrary to all expectation, had hung back; that at Paris, for example, where, through Habeneck's unwearied exertions, Beethoven's symphonies had been naturalized in the musical world, the

proceeds of the concert given for the Beethoven monument had only amounted to the sum of 424 francs 90 cents!

Liszt turned pale when he read this notice. In his admiration for Beethoven he felt the insult offered by this parsimony to the illustrious dead. To atone for this insult — that was the idea that darted through him! And his thought and will were one; so without delay he addressed himself to Lorenzo Bartolini, an Italian sculptor known for a series of years far beyond the limits of his native land,¹ and consulted with this experienced artist concerning a marble monument, whereupon he wrote the following letter to the astonished and delighted Beethoven Committee at Bonn —

GENTLEMEN,—As the subscription for the Beethoven monument proceeds so slowly, and therefore the carrying out of this undertaking appears far off, I venture on a proposal, the acceptance of which will make me very happy.

I offer to complete the sum still required from my own means, and, in return, ask no other privilege than that of naming the artist to whom the execution of the work is to be entrusted. This artist would be Bartolini, of Florence, who is universally esteemed as the first sculptor in Italy.

I have already spoken with him on the subject, and he assures me that a marble monument (for the price of about 50,000—60,000 francs) could be finished in two years, and he is ready to commence the work immediately.

I have the honour, &c.,

PISA, 3rd October, 1839.

FRANZ LISZT.

¹ There exists also a bust of Liszt by Bartolini under date 1838, when Liszt was in Paris.

This great sum, required for setting up the monument, Liszt felt sure he might guarantee from the proceeds of his concerts. He wrote to his friend Berlioz in Paris, giving, as it were, the motives of this proceeding: "What a disgrace for all! What sorrow for us! This state of things must have an end! Surely you agree with me: not so niggardly an alms, so painfully scraped together, should help to build our Beethoven's tomb!"

Liszt now departed, in company with the Countess d'Agoult, for San Rossore, a little fishing-village, the quiet of which was only broken by the foaming waves of the sea, where scarcely any other sound reached the human ear than those of Nature in her solitude. He here lived in a little house about two hundred steps from the shore, built of wood, like the *chalets* of the Bernese Oberland. He passed the days partly in the shade of an old oak wood, partly on the seashore, whence he looked across to an island,¹ which has acquired historical celebrity through a fallen hero; or else, when the evening fell, he watched the setting sun, whose beams shed a fairy-like, everchanging splendour on the fleeting, boundless surface of the waters.

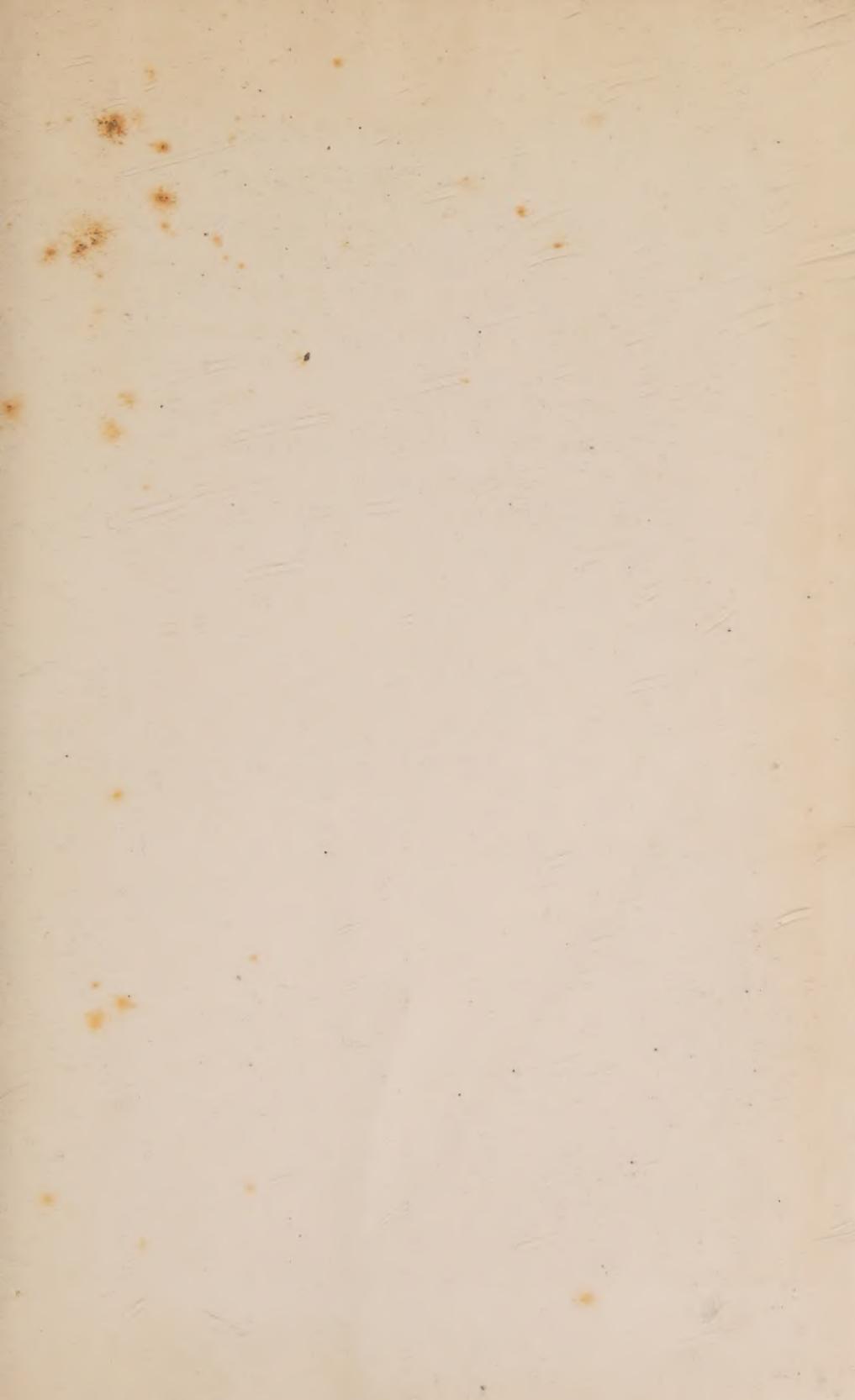
The inhabitants of the village wondered at

¹ Elba.

the stranger who seemed so fond of solitude. To others, too, this temporary inclination seemed unaccountable ; and yet "solitude has a speech intelligible to him who listens to it." In San Rossore Liszt found the repose and self-collection for which his spirit yearned. Here "he sent a last farewell greeting to the fields of Italy, and enjoyed once more the inexpressible beauty of this divinely favoured land."¹

Towards the middle of November Liszt left Italy. His way led to Vienna ; the countess and her attendants started for Paris.

¹ Liszt to Berlioz.



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